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Allegiances

THUNDERCLAN

Leader

Lynxstar - A tan, spotted she-cat with little tufts of fur on her ears, Lime green eyes

Deputy

Greytail - A fluffy grey tom with amber eyes, and a fluffy tail

-Apprentice

Birchpaw

Medicine Cat

Finchfur - A silver and white tom with sky blue eyes

-Apprentice

Amberpaw

Warriors

Sunstorm - A golden tom with golden eyes, very strong

-Apprentice

Poppypaw

Firefur - A dark-ginger tom with amber eyes

Willowpool - A light grey she-cat with emerald eyes

-Apprentice

Galepaw

Oceanbreeze - A blue-silver she-cat with piercing blue eyes, and a single scar

Tigerpelt - A brown tabby tom with yellow eyes

Shadeheart - A black tom with crystal green eyes

Reedfeather - A beige tabby tom with forest green eyes

Apprentices

Birchpaw - A white tabby tom with unnatural brown stripes, yellow eyes

Amberpaw - A tortoiseshell she-cat with fiery amber eyes

Galepaw - A grey tom with sea blue eyes

Poppypaw - A dappled calico with yellow eyes

Queens

Nightwing - A black she-cat with bright blue eyes

-Kits

Moonkit

Maplekit

Sandtail - A sandy she-cat with lime green eyes.

-Kits

Thrushkit

Goldenkit

Frostkit

Kits

Moonkit - A sliver tom with light grey, random stripes across his body, lime eyes

Maplekit - A tortoiseshell tom with amber eyes

Thrushkit - A beige tom with the prettiest grey eyes

Goldenkit - A golden tabby she-cat with yellow eyes

Frostkit - An amber-eyed she-cat with very luxurious white fur

Elders

Barkfur - A mottled tortoiseshell tom with yellow eyes

Cloudeye - A solid white she-cat with blue eyes

RIVERCLAN

Leader

Hailstar - A black tom with many white dots across his pelt, and icy blue eyes

Deputy

Kinkfur - An amber-eyed tom with spiky russet fur

Medicine Cat

Finchcloud - A white and grey she-cat with blue eyes

Warriors

Mistheart - A blue-grey tom with amber eyes

Whitefoot - A black tom with white paws, amber eyes

-Apprentice

Ravenpaw

Streamtail - A silver tabby she-cat, green eyes

Applepelt - A tan tabby tom with yellow eyes

Snowface - A pure white she-cat with light blue eyes

Stormstripe - A dark grey she-cat with dark green eyes

- Apprentice

Greypaw

Rosefrost - A pale-red she-cat with deep, amber eyes

Apprentices

Greypaw - A light grey tom with darker marks, and yellow eyes

Ravenpaw - A black tom with yellow eyes

Queens

Mouseclaw - A brown she-cat with lighter fur on her face, yellow eyes. Currently expecting

Riverflower - A sliver tabby with alterating white and black stripes.

-Kits

Lionkit

Springkit

Heronkit

Kits

Lionkit - A golden tom with solid amber eyes

Springkit - A silver she-cat with lime green eyes

Heronkit - A pure white tom with a very light gray stripe running down his back, and blue eyes

Elders

Fishface - A weirdly colored, brown, black, and grey tom with blue eyes

Brambleleaf - Brown she-cat with amber eyes, former medicine cat

WINDCLAN

Leader

Gorsestar - A tan spotted she-cat with yellow eyes

-Apprentice

Leafpaw

Deputy

Molefoot - A dark grey tom with green eyes

Medicine Cat

Blackleaf - A black tabby tom with bright green eyes

Warriors

Pebblesplash - A light brown tom with amber eyes

Ashspot - A speckled grey she-cat with green eyes

-Apprentice

Harepaw

Honeyheart - A solid honey-yellow she-cat with amber eyes

Crowear - A dark grey tom with blue eyes

Foxflame - A ginger tabby tom with amber eyes

Cinderface - A dusty brown she-cat with blue eyes

Apprentices

Harepaw - A white tom with tan ears, and blue eyes

Leafpaw - A brown and cream tabby she-cat with brown eyes

Queens

Owlfeather - A dark brown she-cat with very bright amber eyes

-Kits

Finchkit

Stagkit

Doekit

Sandwing - A pale-ginger she-cat with sky-blue eyes

-Kits

Swiftkit

Dahliakit

Kits

Finchkit - A very dark gray tom with amber eyes

Stagkit - A muddy brown tom with amber eyes

Doekit - A light grey she-cat with bright yellow eyes

Swiftkit - A very bright ginger she-cat with deep green eyes

Dahliakit - A brown she-cat speckled with white spots, amber eyes

Elders

Whiteclaw - A pure white tom with grey eyes

SHADOWCLAN

Leader

Stygiastar - A pure black she-cat with bright green eyes

Deputy

Badgerclaw - A blue-eyed tom with a badger-patterned pelt

Medicine Cat

Cloudpool - A white she-cat with silver markings and yellow eyes

Warriors

Moonstream - A black and white she-cat with unnatural hazel eyes

Dawnfire - A golden she-cat with fiery amber eyes

-Apprentice

Tallpaw

Darkfang - A dark grey tom with yellow eyes

-Apprentice

Dappledpaw

Poppyfern - A tortoiseshell she-cat with honey-amber eyes

Acornheart - A light brown tom with brown eyes

Twigflower - A brown she-cat with pretty green eyes

Icetooth - A blue-white tom with very icy blue eyes

Apprentices

Tallpaw - A tan tabby tom with yellow eyes

Dappledpaw - A calico she-cat with forest green eyes

Queens

Jackalfur - A mottled grey and tan she-cat with amber eyes

-Kits

Duskkit

Stonekit

Kits

Duskkit - A creamy golden she-cat with emerald green eyes

Stonekit - A dark brown tom with silver stripes and a long ginger stripe running down his back, icy blue eyes

Elders

Moosewhisker - A dark brown she-cat with tan ears and yellow eyes

Fernstorm - A cream tom with pleasant amber eyes

SKYCLAN

Leader

Billystar - A brown tabby tom with green eyes

Deputy

Cedartail - Russet-furred she-cat with green eyes

Medicine Cat

Featherflight - Silver tabby she-cat with amber eyes

-Apprentice

Stonepaw

Warriors

Skystorm - Pure white tom with sky blues eyes

Oakfoot - Brown tom with brown eyes

Snowheart - White tom with shiny blue eyes

Daisyheart - A cream tabby she-cat with yellow eyes

-Apprentice

Ivypaw

Raineye - A tuxedo tom with dull blue eyes

Peonypelt - A rose-golden she-cat with blue eyes

Lilyleaf - A deep golden she-cat, almost a green, with green eyes

Apprentices

Stonepaw - A dark grey tom with amber eyes

Ivypaw - A silver tabby she-cat with green eyes

Queens

Tawnyfur - A dappled brown, tan, and white she-cat with yellow eyes

-Kits

Flamekit

Yellowkit

Sparrowkit

Kits

Flamekit - A ginger tom with blue eyes

Yellowkit - A dappled tan and white she-cat with yellow eyes

Sparrowkit - A brown tabby tom with amber eyes

Elders

Jaypool - A silver and grey she-cat with blue eyes

Prologue

The ginger tom padded along the outskirts of his territory.

Of course, there aren't actually borders, but old habits die hard. So he preferred to wake up early every day, padding around an imaginary line drawn out in his head.

This time though, one of his old friends had decided to join him.

The other tom had sensed something was bugging his friend, and had decided to start joining him on his morning patrols. There was not much spoken between the two, as just the other's presence was enough for each of them.

The ginger tom had sensed some kind of growing darkness, coming from the depths of the Dark Forest, greater than that of Tigerstar or Mapleshade.

But that's not all he felt. There was another... *Thing.* He couldn't describe what it was, or what it felt like. It was just this buzz, nagging at the back of his mind, like it was dying to be let out.

He knew for a fact that the buzz wasn't from any place he knew, such as the Dark forest or Starclan. It was from a different place, likely a place of which he didn't know about.

As the tom and his friend neared the Dark Forest border, a small light could be seen. Not a large light, but just like rays of sun poking through canopies.

The two toms quickly turned around, and sprinted towards the camp, desperate to report. However, when they neared camp, they saw the same amount of light coming from the center of the camp.

The two padded into the camp to see everyone crowding around the light. They padded towards the center to see five small kits curled up in the formation of a star. There was a tortoiseshell, two gingers,

a brown tabby, and a white. Each kit had their eyes closed, as if they were sleeping, so no one could tell their eye color.

Suddenly, the kits were lifted up in the air, and started spinning. The spinning continuously grew faster and faster, until finally, the light, and the kits, just disappeared.

Firestar could only assume that the same had happened at the Dark Forest, just with different cats, that could potentially be evil.

And he really hoped that the five he had seen were able to take care of the others.

Chapter 1 - Maple

I heard voices around me, although I couldn't distinguish if they were from different people, or all from the same person. I wanted to open my eyes as well, but the darkness was... comforting. Like it was holding me in an embrace.

I was wrapped up in something soft. Well, some*things*. There was definitely two things surrounding me.

I clenched my eyes shut, trying to build up the strength to open them.

I stretched my eyelids, and finally was able to open my eyes. Now, I couldn't tell what colors my eyes were, but I had a weird feeling that they were amber. I had a vague memory of someone once telling me that...

I looked around me. I was indeed surrounded by two things. Somebody's tail and a ball of silver fur.

I followed the tail up to a Black body, and saw what I assumed to be my mother for the first time. But she wasn't paying attention to me. She was looking at the little ball of silver fur.

I wanted to speak out, to let her know that I had opened my eyes, but I couldn't make my mouth form words. I looked around to see even more cats crowding around us, but they were all focused on the silver ball.

Except for one of them. A tall, black tom with crystal green eyes.

He was looking straight at me. I don't think he was my father, maybe my mother's brother? I mean, they looked very similar.

Once he noticed I was looking back at him, he nodded to me and padded out of the den.

The little ball of fur beside me suddenly lifted his head, and all the cats around me gasped. He peeled open his eyes to reveal lime green eyes.

My mother removed her tail from me and curled the silver kit closer to her body.

I became cold and mewed in protest, but my mother didn't seem to care. She just looked down at the silver kit with clear adoration in her eyes.

Seeing this, I closed my eyes and curled up back into a ball. I knew that she wasn't going to look at me and see my eyes, and I couldn't tell her that I had opened my eyes, because my mouth couldn't form words yet.

But I wonder why that one cat was just staring at me. I mean, literally everyone else was looking at the other kit with adoration and awe clearly in their eyes. But he had decided to look at me, and as far as I could tell, he looked only at me.

With this, I feel into a comforting sleep.

I opened my eyes to a wonderful landscape. I felt a presence beside me, but when I turned to look, I saw nothing there.

I looked back out to see five things in front of me. There was a winding river, a tall Maple tree, a grand, white bird, a stone, and a blazing fire.

I turned to look around me again, and this time saw four other kits. Each one was looking around, confused just like me. When they saw me, they smiled, but then turned back to look at what was in front of them.

Then was random, insanely strong gust of wind blew us all off of our feet, and we started spinning. We were transferred to a dark

place, where there was nothing but tall trees surrounding us. This place smelled of rot.

In front of us were five kits. When I looked at them more closely, I realized that the silver kit was among them. A much smaller gust of wind blew around us, and I think I heard something whisper.

Remember...

Something in my mind must've clicked, because I was taken back to see everything that had happened to me. Who the cats standing beside me were. Who the other cats were. Who I am.

This all came to me in an instant, like the flavor of a kill flooding your mouth.

I remembered how to speak, how to listen, how to understand words. How to think, how to hunt, how to fight. How to signal things, like if I was hurt, or just a friendly greeting.

I turned to look at the kits beside me. *Heron, Flame, Swift, Stone.*

Then I looked over to where the other kits were. *Moon, Lion, Dahlia, Dusk, Sparrow.* I curled my lips up just thinking about them.

They've come back, but so have you. Don't let us down.

The voice whispered in the wind yet again, and the other cats seemed to have heard it. The Dark Forest cats were still asleep, giddy smiles on their face.

I wonder if they even know who they are, or if Starclan forbade it. They seemed to have still been sleeping, so maybe they just feel like they had a weird dream?

When I turned back around, I saw the other four standing in a circle, their noses pressed together. I joined them.

When my nose touched the others, my entire world began spinning.

When everything stopped moving, I opened my eyes to see I was back in the den.

I saw light filtering through the brambles surrounding the den, telling me it was morning.

My mother's tail was still curled around my brother, leaving me a few mouse-lengths away from her. Everyone else was still sleeping, so I decided I'd take a quick look around camp.

I barely made it out of the Den before I heard my mother's voice.

"Maplekit, get back in here this instant!" I sighed and turned around, padding back to where my mother was laying.

I went by her face, and she reached her paw up and smacked me in the head.

"Ow! Why'd you hit me?"

My mother looked momentarily surprised at my ability to talk, but quickly went back to normal. "You are not to leave this den without my permission! If you do, you will be punished!"

I gave her a feeble nod and tried to snuggle into her belly, but she moved her paw ever so slightly as to block me. So instead, I just lay on the outskirts of the nest, waiting for everyone to wake up.

After only a few moments, a kit I didn't recognize padded over to me and nudged me with a paw.

"Hey, are you okay?"

I looked up to see a beige tom with pretty grey eyes. "Yeah, I'm fine." I stood up and groomed my fur, then asked him, "What's your name?"

He smiled, "My name is Thrushkit. My mom Sandtail is over there." He pointed to a sand-colored cat.

"My name is Maplekit. This is my mother, and this is my brother Moonkit."

He tilted his head over. "What's your mother's name?"

I panicked a bit, realizing that my mother had never told me her name. But then I thought back to when I had my eyes closed. I remember someone calling mom something... Ah hah!

"My mother's name is Nightwing."

He looked to where I was laying down, and then to where my mother was curled up around Moonkit. "You're mother doesn't seem to like you as much as she likes Moonkit."

I nodded in response, but tried to change the subject. "You wanna grab some moss and play Mossball?"

"Sure!" He smiled and grabbed a clump of moss and threw it at me.

And from that moment on, Thrushkit was my best friend.

Alright, First Chapter done!

I'm really excited to start this, even if I know it's gonna take a long time.

I'm trying to always raise the word count to 1100, so hopefully that works.

I don't think I'm going to do any quizzes for this book, but let me know if you want them!

Also, comment if you need any clarification on the reasoning behind some of the cat's name, I know a few of them are confusing, like Stygiastar or Springkit.

Alright, that's all for now! See ya next week!

-Maple

Chapter 2 - Heron

That weird dream was very, well, weird. Four cats that I didn't recognize, that I now recognize, were there with me, that made it even weirder. I had also seen my littermate Lionkit in the Dark Forest. That meant I'd probably end up being "friendly" rivals with him, and better friends with my sister, Springkit.

Although I don't even know if Lionkit remembers who he is, because as far as I could see, his eyes were closed, his mouth curled up in a content smile as if he were sleeping. So maybe he wouldn't try to kill me every second of my life.

That would be nice. But it's not probable

So I guess I'll just have to live the life where everything is normal except for the fact that me and my twin brother are natural enemies. Yay...

I woke up, my mother's tail still protectively wrapped around my siblings and myself. I hadn't opened my eyes up prior to this, but I had learned enough from cats talking around me, as well as the dream.

"Oh! Heronkit! You've opened your eyes!" My mother was looking down at me, and I looked back up at her, "Oh, and what a pretty blue they are! My name is Riverflower, and I'm your mother!" She gave me a nice smile.

She wasn't necessarily attractive, because her face markings were a bit too much, but she was pretty. I could tell that she probably had a nice personality.

She kept her smile, until we heard the mewls from the two other kits. They must have woken up, and were probably begging for milk.

I nosed each of them towards Riverflower's belly, and then settled

in myself, taking my fair share of milk. As I was drinking, I thought about Lionkit, and if he would really grow to hate me. I sincerely hoped not. Maybe we could change him back to good.

"We" as in the other four and myself. I know that I've met them before, but their names are still new in my head.

Maple, Swift, Stone, Flame.

I'm water, Swift is air, Stone is Earth, and Flame is fire. So then where does Maple fit in? Maybe he's part of a fifth element, like life? Although that isn't really an element. Just a... Well, I don't really know. A creation, I guess.

After I finished up my milk, I looked over to my siblings. Springkit was peacefully snoring, her belly full from the milk. Lionkit was squinting his eyes, most likely trying to open them up so he could see the world for the first time.

I shuffled closer to him and started grooming his fur, trying to build up his confidence to open his eyes. He continued squinted, and I continued grooming, getting more excited.

I didn't care if he may one day grow up and kill me, he was my brother, and I was going to help him.

Good Starclan above, I sound like a parent.

While I was distracted think about my parent-like abilities, I heard my mother gasp.

"Lionkit! You've opened your eyes! Woah... that's a cool amber!" Riverflower started a barrage of licks on Lionkit, and he just sunk into it. It's not like he could do anything anyways. I forced a smile, and looked at Lionkit with pretend delight. I'm not a monster, of course I was excited for him, but I didn't know how he was going to turn out in life. If he was going to be on my side, or on the Dark Forest's side.

After a while, Lionkit looked at me, frowned and lopped his head to the side. He must have been able to see through my attempted wall to cover how I felt.

"Mommy, who is that?" Riverflower stopped her licking and turned to look at me, and then brought her face down to Lionkit's.

"That, Lionkit, is your brother Heronkit." She then turned Lionkit around and looked down at Springkit. "And this is your sister, Springkit."

I padded over to where the other two were watching Spring kit, and leaned against Riverflower. Springkit was sleeping, it was unlikely she would just wake up and open her eyes. But we sat and looked at her anyways. She would probably wake up later today and just magically have her eyes open, because she was asleep when Lionkit and I opened ours.

Springkit was purring and moving around in her sleep, telling us she was having a pleasant dream.

I quickly got bored of watching her, and decided to pad over to the other cat lying in the den, who I still had yet to meet.

She looked up at me, and slightly smiled. "Hi there Heronkit. How are you?"

I nodded at her, and then looked to her belly. It was... large.

She chuckled. "I'm expecting kits Heronkit. Little friends for you. They'll be here in a few days." I immediately got excited. New playmates! Sure, I have never played before, but just thinking the word made me feel happy.

"Oh, where are my manners. My name is Mouseclaw. But I've already met you, so you don't need to introduce yourself."

I smiled at her, and kept trying to pronounce her name in my head.

Mouzclaw. Moueclaw. Mouseclaw. Mouseclaw! What a weird name...

"Mouseclaw, how did you get your name?"

She shuffled her paws to get into a comfortable position, looking to the sky to think. "Well, I would assume I was named 'Mouse' because My pelt is a brown, like a mouse. I was named 'Claw'

because I'm a really good fighter."

I leapt up from my sitting position and crouched, wagging my tail. "Will you show me?"

Mouseclaw chuckled and used her tail to stroke my back. "No, you're too small. Plus, I'm expecting kits, and it may hurt them. You wouldn't want to hurt your friends, would you?" I franticly shook my head. "Good. Maybe I'll have a play-fight with you when you're older, like an apprentice."

My tail drooped down to the ground, but I nodded, dragging myself back to where my mother and Lionkit had settled in to the nest, still watching Springkit intently.

I settled in beside them, taking a quick glance at Springkit, who was still in a deep sleep. I then looked over to where Mouseclaw was getting up, probably to go out of the den and get some fresh air.

Then I looked over to Lionkit, who had fallen asleep while watching Springkit. I wanted to believe that Lionkit would be on our side. That he wouldn't go the wrong way. That he would stay with us, and fight against the others.

But as I drifted off to sleep in the nook of my mothers belly, I heard voices whispering in my head.

You know he'll join them anyways. But there still may be hope. So continue as you are, protecting him in every way possible, helping him in every little thing. But don't let your sister separate from you. She will play a key part in preserving the future of the clans.

With those thoughts, I drifted off into a nice sleep.

Yay! I'm debating on who my favorite is going to be. Mr. Left out Maple or Mr. Protective Heron....

Not like those two are my OCs..... not at all...

Next up will be Swiftkit and Windclan! This next one may be a

bit funnier.

You guys haven't requested any quizzes, so I won't do any, except for special occasions.

OC forms are closed until further notcie! DO NOT! submit your OC's!

So, until next time,

-Maple

Chapter 3 - Swift

The past few days had been tiring. Me and my sister had gone out of the den for the first time, exploring the vast openness of the Windclan camp.

The dream I had with those other four cats still haunts me, and sometimes I look at my sister like she's about to turn into a demon and devour me. And as I do so, she'll just pounce around, pretending that she's catching a mouse, when all that's under her paws is a ball of moss.

While she was the playful one, I was the one that would want things to get done. I'd bug people, seeing if they need help with anything. Yesterday I helped an apprentice clean off the elder's ticks. I hated seeing an unfinished project, or someone that would complain about getting things done.

But I wasn't going to be a jerk about it. I'd try to help everyone in a nice way, not trying to pressure them into making me help, or to stop them from complaining. Because sometime, complaining is necessary.

That is a really stupid remark. Ignore that I said that.

"Swiftkit, come over here. Your fur is a mess! You too, Dahliakit!" I rolled my eyes, padding over to my mother and sitting down. I know I just said that I hated seeing a job not done, but washing fur and grooming are both wastes of time.

And I believe that every kit under the appropriate age of a warrior agrees with me.

Dahliakit looked over to me while my mother was grooming her. "Don't you hate getting groomed?"

I nodded vigorously, but then stopped. "Yes, but we don't really groom ourselves, so I guess mom just grooms us because we don't

do it ourselves." My mother finished up grooming Dahliakit and pulled me closer to her.

In between licks, she told us, "Once I've finished grooming Swiftkit, you guys can go and see Whiteclaw. I'm sure he has a story for you." My eyes lit up with excitement, and I silently encouraged my mother to speed up my grooming.

My mother did speed up slightly, and eventually, I was groomed. My fur looked nice and sleek, and it had a shimmer to it.

I bounced up, and was tempted to shake my fur, but didn't. My sister and I sprinted out of the den, dodging the warrior's paws, and making our way over to the elder's den.

Inside was Whiteclaw getting his ticks cleaned off by Harepaw. Harepaw saw us, and smiled. "Hi guys! I've almost finished cleaning off Whiteclaw's ticks. When I'm finished, I'll go so he can tell you a story!"

Whiteclaw heard this, and looked over to where Dahliakit and I were standing. "Oh, hey there you two. There's an empty nest over there if you want to lay down and wait." Dahliakit nodded and started heading over, but I still had my eyes locked on Harepaw.

He must've caught me staring, because he said, "Swiftkit? Are you alright?"

I turned my head away from him and blushed, "Yeah. I'm fine." I shook my head, and then padded over to where Dahliakit was lying in wait.

She saw me coming, and smirked. "You *so* like him!"

"I-Wha-Do not!" My blush returned to my face.

He smirk grew into a smile. "Yeah you do. You were staring at him like: 'Oh Harepaw, won't you be my mate?' But I can't really blame you. He is a good-looking tom."

My blush grew larger, just like Dahliakit's smirk, and I scream-whispered, "Shut up!"

I must've said it too loud, because I could feel both Whiteclaw and Harepaw's gazes on my back. "Are you two alright?" I heard Whiteclaw ask.

Dahliakit, still glaring at me, responded, "Yes, we're just fine, thanks."

In that moment, the other three kits entered the den. "Whiteclaw? Owlfeather said you'd have a story for us!" Stagkit spoke up. The other two kits were bouncing with excitement.

Harepaw repeated what he said to us. "I've just about finished getting rid of Whiteclaw's ticks. If you want to wait over where Dahliakit and Swiftkit are, I'm sure they'll play with you until Whiteclaw is ready."

The three kits nodded and padded over to us. "You guys wanna play a game of mossball?" Doekit asked.

I grabbed a clump of leftover moss that was in the corner of the den, and threw it over the where Dahliakit was laying. "C'mon Dahliakit, play with us!" I was basically whining.

"No, I'm good. I think I'm just gonna lay here and wait."

I wonder if this attitude is going to hurt in the future. I hope this isn't the start of her evil "reign".

While we were playing, every few seconds I would look over at Dahliakit. She would either smile back at me, or would be watching on of the other kits. But she was also twitching her paw forwards sometimes, like she actually wanted to play with us, but didn't feel like it.

When she was focusing on one of the other kits, I stalked behind her, and then tried to nose her up onto her feet. "C'mon. You're playing with us whether you like it or not." Dahliakit opened her mouth to complain, but I cut her off. "We both know that you want to play with us, I can see it in your eyes. So please, just enjoy it."

She sighed, but then nodded, running over and intercepting the ball when Stagkit tried to throw it at Finchkit. "Hey! Dahliakit! Why'd

you- Wait, Dahliakit? Dahliakit!" Doekit was the first to realize that Dahliakit joined them, and soon, they were all excited.

This didn't continue for long, however. Harepaw soon finished up, and called to us, "Okay guys, you're all free to listen to Whiteclaw!"

Well all said 'good-bye' to him, and he started to pad out. He turned around to say it to me as well, but after he did, his gaze rested on me a little longer than it should have.

I tuned out most of Whiteclaw's story, just thinking about Harepaw. *His cute face, those beautiful eyes, the colored ears.*

"And they lived happily ever after. The end!" I and come back to my senses just as Whiteclaw was finishing his story.

"What a great story!" Doekit was jumping around, truly looking her age.

Whiteclaw nodded, "Thank you. Now, it's getting late. You all should get back to your mothers for some sleep."

I seemed to be the only one okay with that, as the other kits voiced their complaints.

I slowly padded back to the nursery, looking up most of the time at the stars.

When I was just about to enter the den, I slammed into someone.

"Ow! Whoops, sorry Swiftkit!" It was Pebblesplash, Doekit, Stagkit, and Finchkit's father. "I was just coming out from saying goodnight to Owlfeather. But good night to you too!"

I nodded, not really paying attention. Even with the little delay from Pebblesplash, I was still the first one back to the nursery. My mother was already curled up, almost asleep. She wearily opened her eyes. "Oh, hey Swiftkit. C'mere. It's time for bed."

She seemingly didn't care about where Dahliakit was, but after a few seconds. She came into the den, and my mother repeated the process with her.

After that, it only took a few seconds for me to fall into a nice sleep, filled with images of Harepaw.

Swiftkit and Harepaw, sittin' in a tree. K-I-S-S-I-N-G

I'm so excited to write more romance. T-T. But it's necessary.

This chapter is done! I hope young love made you laugh! If it didn't, what am I doing with my life? Next chapter should be up on Friday. I don't make promises though.

I had no ideas for the Author's note. So for now,

-Maple

Chapter 4 - Stone

I hate everything. This doesn't come as a surprise, seeing as I've been made quite infamous by my grumpiness, but I can't help it. Everyone around me is an idiot.

The only thing that gives me comfort after that dream is sleep. Which is something I do often. It's fun, and it takes my mind off of things.

My mother tries to be nice to me, but I can't accept her appreciation because she doesn't try to be nice to me to suit *me,* she tries to be nice in general. Let me rephrase that. She doesn't do things that *I* like, she does things that people like in general. She tries to do the norms, not the specifics.

My sister was alright, she wasn't mean to me and any way, but I didn't know how long that was going to last from the dream. I would try to be nicer to her, bu again, I didn't know how long that was going to last.

I also don't know why StarClan chose me for the "Protect the Clans" side. I never did anything special. Sure, I fought in a big battle and killed a lot of evil cats, but I'm really grumpy all the time and don't make friends with many people for that reason.

I understood why the other five were chosen though. Maple was smart, Heron was brave, Flame was strong, and Swift was kind. But I don't have a place here. Here's a few adjectives that describe me:

Ignorant.

Grumpy.

Big.

Reclusive.

The only thing that could give me any credit was that I was intimidating. I was big, like I said, and had intimidating blue eyes. No one ever really looked at me for longer than a few seconds, and that was only if they were talking to me. They would avert their eyes after only a few words, and then I'd be left staring at the side of their face while they were talking.

"Stonekit, why don't you go play with the others?" My mother had her eyes down by my face. "You always stay back with me. How about you go try that game they're playing?"

I shook my head, not speaking a word, and turned away from her. I had never played with them, and I intended to keep the streak.

I looked out of the den to see Duskkit playing with Dappledpaw and Tallpaw. They were just chasing each other around the clearing of camp.

Jackalfur, my mother, rolled her eyes, huffed, and then nosed me onto my feet. Her eyes had changed from their usual kindness, and were now serious. "Go. I don't want you back in this den until all of them have gone back to their den."

If there was one person I was not going to disobey, it was my mother. She was normally one of the only ones nice to me, but when she was angry, she was angry. Real angry.

I had never been punished by her, but I saw one of my older brothers, Acornheart, get punished.

Let's just say... I really didn't want to get punished.

I started padding away, and was almost out of the den when I heard my mother speak, "And Stonekit?" I looked back at her, "Try to enjoy it, okay?"

I gave a small nod, and continued on my way out of the den. Tallpaw was the first to spot me, and he looked somewhat confused. "Stonekit? What a pleasant surprise! Are you gonna play tag with us?"

I rolled my eyes and grunted, "If you teach me how to play."

Dappledpaw came over, confused. "What? You don't know how to play tag? Do you have a life?" Dappledpaw smiled, as if it was a joke, but I didn't like the tone in which she said it.

I just growled and kept to myself, however. I had promised my mother that I would have fun, and getting into an argument within thirty seconds would certainly *not* be fun.

The two apprentices explained the game quickly, deciding that I should start out as the "tagger". I was supposed to count, so I did, and then started chasing the others around.

I was still a kit, so I had small legs, meaning I didn't really stand a chance in chasing the others. But I continued chasing them anyways, a small spark of joy igniting in my heart.

Dappledpaw saw my struggle, and slowed down just a small amount, enough for me to catch up to her. As I was running, I bunched my hind legs and sprang towards her, tapping her with my paw. "Ha ha ha! You're it!"

She smiled and started chasing the others, while I lied down on the ground. I opened my mouth and started heaving heavy breaths. For the first time in my very short life, I had experienced joy, and it was exhausting.

Tallpaw was chasing around Dappledpaw now, laughing. Duskkit was over by our mother, being groomed. I rolled onto my back and stretched my legs, then stood up and padded over to the fresh-kill pile. Mother had allowed us to start eating solid food, and I felt like having a mouse.

There was a small mouse resting on the top of the pile, the perfect size for Duskkit and myself to share. I grabbed it between my jaws and padded over to my mother and Duskkit.

My mother looked up at me and smiled, "Aw, thanks Stonekit! I would've gotten the mouse for you two." I rolled my eyes just enough so that my mother wouldn't see, and bent down to where my sister was laying, tucking into the mouse.

"We both hate to hear it," Duskkit was speaking in between bites, "but thanks for bringing this." I gave a small nod a rolled my eyes once again as I bent down to take another bite.

Chewing my latest bite, the flavor of the kill exploding in my mouth, I thought about that weird dream with the other four cats. I already knew them before that weird voice. I had always had the best memory.

Probably because I never focused on small things like having a mate or trying to please anyone, so I was able to notice smaller things. The only one who somewhat shared that was Maple, but he wasn't nearly as good as me.

Maple, Heron, Swift, Flame... Wow, it's been a long time since I last heard those names...

Then I thought to the Dark Forest cats, one of whom is my sister now. They were our mortal enemies back in our first life. There was one to counter each of us, but it wasn't so much of a counter as it was just an equal foe.

Dusk had always shared my strength of noticing small things, memory, and being intimidating. And now she was my sister. Great.

Moon, Lion, Dahlia, Dusk, and Sparrow... It's been awhile, although I can't say I'm pleased to see you've returned as well.

I swallowed my last bite of the mouse, and left Duskkit by herself to finish up the last bit of mouse.

Heading over to the Medicine Cat's den, I was greeted with the strong smell of herbs.

She must be sorting herbs then. I'll talk to her later.

I turned around and headed back to the nursery, ready to curl up into a ball and drift off.

As I laid down, however, I could fall asleep. I twisted and turned, but my mind wouldn't wander off.

I tried getting into a more comfortable position, and was able to at least keep my eyes closed. I heard someone walk into the den, and they started grooming my fur. This allowed me to finally drift off into that blank, dark holiness.

That felt like it took forever, but that was mainly because I started it before break and ended it today.

I'm back! Well, at least for awhile. I go back to in-person in two weeks, so after that updates will be less frequent.

This is actually my younger brother's OC, so thank to him for letting me use it.

That's probably the first time I've ever said thanks to him.

Cherish it, Michael.

Okay, I'll stop bein' weird.

Until the next,

-Maple

Chapter 5 - Flame

I envy others. Like my brother, for example, the one I saw in the dream. For all I can tell, he's been living a happy, stress-free life. And that makes me mad. Which is why I don't really laugh. I'm strict, sure, but I'm not strict to the point of where everything I do is order people around. People still like me, but that was when I was big, and glorified. Now I'm this small little ball of nothing.

So I've basically turned into a mini Stone. Speaking of him, I wonder how he's doing. He was my best friend of "The Crew", because we were both these big, strong toms.

"Good morning Flamekit!" Yellowkit flashed a toothy grin at me, and nosed me up onto my paws. "C'mon, let's go out to the cliff and play by the rocks!"

By this time my mother had woken up, and was looking a the too of us. "Yellowkit, that's dangerous!"

"Exactly!"

"A rock may fall and you could get hurt!"

"I know!"

"You could die!"

"That's the coolest part!"

My mother sighed, and looked at me now. "Flamekit, do you even want to go play by the cliffs?" I shook my head. "See? You won't even have any fun!"

"Aw come ON! Flamekit, you're no fun!"

I mean, yeah, seeing as I don't laugh, I'm not fun. But you wouldn't know that.

Sparowkit was still sleeping in my mother's embrace. I turned away from him, and closed my eyes, trying to fall back asleep after Yellowkit had woken me up. My mother seemed to have the same idea.

I kept tossing and turning, and surprisingly found comfort snuggled up next to my brother, the kit I was sure to hate the most in my life.

"Let all cat's old enough to leap The Rocks gather beneath the Sky-ledge for a clan meeting!" Billystar's voice rang around the clearing, calling all cats to him, but also waking me up. Which I did not appreciate.

My mother stood up, and gathered my siblings and myself in front of her with her tail, and started padding out of the den. We sat a few tail-lengths in front of the nursery, so that we cold listen in.

"Thank you all for coming, I'll let Featherflight take over." Billystar backed away and Featherflight leapt up onto the Sky-ledge.

"Thank you Billystar." She cleared her throat, and belted out, "Stonepaw, please step forward."

Stonepaw smiled and padded up to the Sky-ledge, his tail twitching in excitement.

"Stonepaw, you have learnt all I can teach you. Do you promise to uphold the Warrior's Code, as well as the Medcine Cat's Code, even at the cost of your life?"

Stonepaw smiled. "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I name you Stonecreek, Medicine cat of Skyclan."

I looked around and saw all of the cats chanting. "Stonecreek!

Stonecreek! Stonecreek!"

Featherflight spoke again, "We will be traveling to the Moonpool tonight, along with the other medicine cats, where Stonecreek will be accepted by Starclan."

Stonecreek leapt down and was immediately surrounded by all of the cats, each congratulating him in their own way.

My mother left us as well, and my siblings and I went back to the nursery. I was too tired to do any sort of playing, and I assumed the others were as well.

But I didn't feel like sleeping. I just had to wait for the others to fall asleep. It took awhile, but after contentedly purring next to them, they both fell asleep.

I had discovered something when I was playing around a few days ago, and I assumed it had something to do with when I was reborn. I didn't have it in my first life, so there must be something going on.

I took a deep breath, opened my mouth, and started blowing, with my mouth still opened. Sure enough, after a few seconds, a tiny little stream of pure flame came from my mouth, jetting out in a small, straight line. I was careful not to let the flames touch any wall, and tried to keep it near the center of the den.

Suddenly, Stonecreek walked into the den. I quickly closed my mouth, but it was too late. He had already seen what I could do. He looked surprised, and then immediately calmed down.

His gazed turned serious, and he looked at me. "Not here. Come with me."

I was confused, but followed him out of the den nonetheless. He took me out of camp, to a place that was a decent distance form the main camp.

Stonecreek turned around, and examined me. "So you're one of them, huh?" My gaze widened. "Let me tell you how I know.

"One day, when I was an apprentice, a Starclan cat came to me and

told me a prophecy. That prophecy was: *'Five is a team, but ten is a crowd'.* He didn't say anything else, other than to not tell anyone unless I am sure that I have found one."

Obviously the five thing is talking about me, Maple, Heron, Swift, and Stone. And then the ten must be including the others. Which means I'm positive that I know what it means... and I hope We can stop it.

Sure, I hate him now, but that? I mean, he's still my littermate. Same with the others as far as I know.

Stonecreek straightened his posture, and looked down at me. "I'm going to the Moonpool tonight. I'm also going to be going to Windclan territory tomorrow to pick up some herbs I need. I want you to join me."

I stared at him like he was crazy, responding, "Are you crazy? What would my mother do when she finds out? How would Featherflight react when she finds out that you took a kit to another clan's camp? I'm not going with you."

"Come on, Flamekit! We both know what this prophecy means! It's best if you get acquainted with the others now, instead of later!" I just looked away from him, trying to hold my point. He sighed in response, "Fine. You become an apprentice in a little over a moon. The night of your first gathering, I want you to sit by me. I can communicate with the other medicine cats about who to have sit by them."

I already knew the next words that were going to come out of his mouth.

"But that does mean you'll have to tell me the names of the others. Not the ones with the Dark Forest, just your allies."

I sighed and nodded for us to start heading back to camp. He was the smarter of the two medicine cats, Featherflight was just more talented. I knew that he would be able to keep to his word, and he wouldn't spill anything to anyone. "Maple from Thunderclan, Heron from Riverclan, Swift from Windclan, and Stone from Shadowclan."

He put up a smirk on his face, and said, "So that leaves just you. Nice to meet you, Flame of Skyclan. It's an honor."

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT THEIR FIRST LIFE!!!!!

That one was a bit shorter than the rest, a little over 1100 words. Sorry.

Thanks florijn11 for writing the base structure of the first paragraph, as well as making the OC for me to use. Big help.

I don't know if I'm going to have two updates next week, because the Semester ends. So don't count on having two new chapters.

See y'all either Tuesday or Friday.

-Maple

Chapter 6 - Maple

Thrushkit, along with his siblings, had been jumping around in excitement ever since they woke up. Today was their Apprentice ceremony. Sandtail looked exhausted, and could barely lift her head. Thrushkit's father, Sunstorm, padded into the den, giving his mate a quick lick on her head.

"Hey, kits. Are you ready for today?"

"Yeah!"

"I'm so excited!"

"I wonder who my mentor's going to be?"

I sat net to Thrushkit, smiling happily. My apprentice ceremony was tomorrow, and I was excited.

I looked over to Moonkit to see him playing with Nightwing's tail, and Nightwing smiling down at him. I was tempted to join him, but I knew my mother would shove me away.

When I looked back, Sunstorm as laid down next to his mate, talking in quiet voices. Thrushkit, Goldenkit, and Frostkit were heading outside. "C'mon, Maplekit, come play mossball with us!"

I snuck a look at Moonkit one more time, nodded, and followed them outside. Goldenkit led us to a small area next to the nursery, but away from any area that a warrior would walk by.

Frostkit gathered a small, discarded bundle of moss, and passed it to me. I passed it over the Thrushkit, and so on. We played until sun-high, when Sandtail called their names. I had the ball, and this shocked me, making me miss the other cats largely. The ball dropped into a bramble bush.

The kits just shrugged, and started heading towards the nursery. I felt bad for missing, however, and decided to go and look for the

ball.

Looking through gaps in the brambles, I saw the moss ball. It was pretty deep in the bushes, and with my little paws, I couldn't reach it. I kept trying to stretch my arms out farther and farther, but I couldn't reach it. I took my paw out, and made one, huge lunge with my front legs.

I didn't reach it, but I could slowing feel myself stretching out. I opened my eyes to see brown strings coming out of my paws.

Wait, roots? Cool...

I grabbed the ball and quickly retreat my paws out of the brambles, snagging one on a thorn and getting a little cut. I turned around to see Frostkit standing behind me with her mouth agape.

"Woah..."

My entire mind stopped working, my mouth fumbling for words. "Uh, don't tell?"

She nodded vigorously. Once she got out of her trance, she looked around like she was imagining things. Her eyes then landed on my paw, where I was cut. "Oh, you may want to get that check by Finchfur." She padded back towards the nursery, occasionally shaking her head in disbelief.

That was a weird thing. Frostkit knows, I wonder if I should tell Thrushkit. I know him better, and trust him just as much as I trust Frostkit... But still, I don't feel like this is something to share to everyone, and Thrushkit is pretty social.

"Maplekit? Are you alright?" Amberpaw was standing in front of me. I looked around myself to see that my mind had taken me to the Medicine Cat's den.

Well, perfect.

"Uh, yeah. I snagged my paw on some brambles while I was playing with the other kits. It doesn't hurt that bad, but Frostkit said to get it checked." I held up my paw to show her.

She grabbed it, took a quick look at it, and walked to the back of the den.

Amberpaw came back with a large, green leaf.

Dock. Good for scratches. Huh, funny I still know this stuff.

She tore some of the leaf up, and then put it in her mouth. As she chewed, I thought back to my first life.

"This is Dock. It's good for scratches. Understand, Maple?"

"Yes. Thank you, Doe." I smiled, and left the den.

I remember being a warrior, and having to learn herbs, on order of our leader. Doe was very cooperative, and she was young, still having her full life ahead of her.

Sweet, sweet Doe. It's too bad those Mountain Cats came... Things could've been different...

I came out of my thoughts to see Amberpaw applying the chewed up dock to my paw. As she finished up applying the poultice, she smiled down at me. "You're a tough cat for not complaining, you know that? I know some warriors who would come into the den whining about a scratch tinier then yours!"

While I was amused, I was not surprised. There's always some wimpy cats in a group. That's not saying they aren't good warriors, just that they act like kittens sometimes.

I gave Amberpaw a once-over while she went back to go get some cobwebs. She was a pretty cat, and really nice as well. She had the makings of a Medicine Cat, and was already skilled, even at her young age. She had nice tortoiseshell fur, just like myself. Honestly, she looked like an older, feminine version of myself.

I wonder if we're related... whether from my past life or my current life, I don't know.

"Alright, Maplekit! You're all set! Just try to rest for a little bit to heal that paw up!" I gave a small nod, and started heading out of

the den. "Oh, Maplekit? Has Nightwing ever told you that we're siblings?" I shook my head. "Huh, that's weird. Alright, bye Maplekit!"

I tried to act like a kit, and said "Bye!" in a really excited voice. I started heading back to the nursery, where Nightwing would be wondering where I went.

So we are *siblings. No wonder we looked so alike. I guess Nightwing just never thought to tell us.*

By now the sun was setting, and I let out a full-faced yawn.

Wow, we really played all day.

"Maplekit! There you are! Where were you?" My mother was standing at the front of the nursery, staring down at me.

"I scratched my paw on a bramble while we were playing outside, so I went to the medicine cat's den."

"YOU WENT OUTSIDE WITHOUT MY PERMISSION AGAIN! IF YOU HADN'T DONE THAT, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN HURT!" After screaming at me, she smacked me, and stormed back inside the den. I followed her inside, and heard Sandtail and Nightwing talking.

"You really should let him go out more, Nightwing! It's not good for him to be cooped up all day! And they were just playing, what's so bad about that?"

"DON'T YOU TELL ME HOW TO MOTHER MY KITS! I'LL MOTHER THEM HOW I SEE FIT!"

My mother didn't notice me, and after he temper subsided, she went over to where Moonkit was still sleeping, and laid down.

Sandtail obviously saw that my mother wasn't going to sleep with me, so she quietly beckoned me with her tail over to her.

"You can sleep with us, Maplekit. I'm sure the other kits won't mind." I said my thanks, and squeezed in between Thrushkit and

one of Sandtail's legs.

I tried to think about all the reasons my mother could possibly hate me.

I mean, it's possible this isn't her first life and she's sided with Moon and the others, but that's a slim chance. She could've had some kind of trauma when she was younger with her parents, but her parents love her and she has no siblings.

S omething to do with a mate? I mean, I still haven't met my father. Although it isn't required for a queen to tell who the father is...

Next chapter done!

There won't be another one this week, but expect more updates for awhile, because I don't go back to In-person until February 8th!

UGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

Online learning sucks.

Somebody did ask for quizzes, so I guess I'll start doing those.

Maybe a riddle this time.

What has a bed but never sleeps, and has a mouth but never eats? It can't dance, but it can flow, and there's only one the goes to the wrong pole.

That was not that good...

See y'all soon!

-Maple

Chapter 7 - Maple

I woke up with a start. I looked around me, unaware of this unfamiliar place. It took me a lot longer than it should have to figure out that I was sleeping with Thrushkit and his family.

Probably because I always sleep by myself. It's such a weird feeling to be warm.

I yawned, got up, and stretched out my body, bones making popping noises every once and awhile. For once, I didn't wake up dead tired in the morning. And I slept amazingly well.

This was normal for Moon, Thrushkit, Frostkit, and Goldenkit, and probably a lot of other cats in this clan. Some of them even sleep with mates, so the warmth is doubled...

Wait a second, Thrushkit's apprentice ceremony was supposed to be yesterday! And mine is today! That means we're becoming apprentices together!

I smiled to myself, now excited for the day ahead of me. I'd be sure to get my last few play-times in, because my mother can't touch me when I become and apprentice.

Well, technically she still can, but one day, I'll be old enough to fight back. Which is exciting.

Yay me.

But then again, she'd still be able to physically touch me... which is annoying, because that's an invasion of my personal space...

"Good morning Maplekit!" Goldenkit had woken up, and was sitting next to her mother.

I smiled at her and returned the greeting. "Good morning! Are you excited for today?" Goldenkit looked confused, so I elaborated, "Today we become apprentices!"

Her face lit up with excitement and realization. "Oh yeah, that's right!" She started prancing around, bumping into her siblings every now and again.

Frostkit awoke drowsily. "Huh? Maplekit, what's going-MMPHH!" And then her face was shoved into the ground by Goldenkit.

"Goldenkit! That hurt!" Frostkit held her face in her paws. When she looked up at me, she didn't have any blood on her face, but there was dirt smeared everywhere.

Goldenkit stopped her prancing and finally decided to check up on her sister. "Oops, sorry Frostkit! Didn't mean to."

All of this commotion had woken up Thrushkit and Sandtail, who still looked drowsy. "Good morning kits. Are you excited?" We all nodded quickly. "Good. Thrushkit, Goldenkit, Frostkit, I had all of your apprenticeships delayed so you could all become apprentices together. I hope that was okay with you."

Goldenkit, being the brave one, had to speak up. "Well, you kind of killed yesterday's fun, but that's alright! Now we get to explore the territory together!"

She was right, but I don't know if all of us were going to.

I looked over to where Moonkit was just waking up. I had a feeling Nightwing was going to get some sort of special mentor for him.

Moonkit stood up, and padded over to us. He was significantly bigger than me, around Thrushkit's height. "What did I miss?"

Goldenkit, the only one still unaware of my rivalry with Moonkit, responded, "We're becoming apprentices today!"

"Oh, really?" Everyone nodded. "That's nice. I already know who my mentor is."

Knowing Nightwing, she probably had some sort of connection to Lynxstar, so she'd probably request that she mentored him. She'd probably have some sort of special request for me as well. Maybe she requested I get trained by an elder or something.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Highrock for a clan meeting!" Lynxstar's voice rang out, calling all cats to the center of the clearing.

I let out a long breath, sending a shiver down my body. Even though I knew this would be a very short ceremony, as it usually was, nervousness was coursing through my veins.

Well, here goes nothing. Let's hope it isn't that bad. It's not like I'm going to stuck with my mentor for the next several moons.

"Thrushkit, Goldenkit, Frostkit, Moonkit, Maplekit, please step forward." We all stepped forward. Moonkit was just standing there cooly, a smirk on his face. The other three kits were bouncing in excitement. I was trying to stand tall, but nervousness was creeping into my head.

"Goldenkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice." Lynxstar took a quick look around the clearing eyeing out every cat carefully. "Oceanbreeze, you are ready to take on your first apprentice. You are know for you speed and cunning, and I hope you pass down all you know. Welcome to apprenticeship, Goldenpaw!"

As mentor and apprentice touched noses, the clearing rang out in excitement. "Goldenpaw! Goldenpaw! Goldenpaw!" Goldenpaw and Oceanbreeze retreated into the depth of the crowd, and the ceremony continued.

"Thrushkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice." Lynxstar took a quick look at one cat in particular. "Reedfeather, you are ready to take on another apprentice. You trained Oceanbreeze very well and I hope you pass

down all of the same skills. Welcome to apprenticeship, Thrushpaw!"

The same process went over with Thrushpaw, touching noses, the chant, and retreating into the crowd.

Frostkit went next, but I zoned out for most of it. I did see her pass by with a warrior I knew, Firefur.

"Moonkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice." Lynxstar didn't look out in the crowd at all. "I will train you myself. I see great potential in you, and hope I can pass down all I know to you. Welcome to apprenticeship, Moonpaw!"

Yeah right. You just wanted to please Nightwing.

The clan was just as surprised as I was, but still chanted out his name nonetheless. "Moonpaw! Moonpaw! Moonpaw!" I made sure to keep my voice quiet.

Moonpaw went up to touch noses, and sat up on the Highrock with Lynxstar when he finished.

"Maplekit."

Here we go.

"You have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice." Again, Lynxstar didn't look into the crowd. Which was not a good sign. "Shadeheart, you are ready for your first apprentice. Sunstorm taught you well, and I hope you can pass down all you know. Welcome to apprenticeship Maplepaw!"

A large, black tom with green eyes came over to me. Immediately every noise around me was drowned out.

Shadeheart, the grumpiest cat in the clan. Almost as bad as Stone.

But then I took a look closer at him.

This is the cat who looked at me when I opened my eyes. And now that

he's up close, I feel like I know him.

I touched his nose, which was ice cold, parallel to the cold day surrounding us.

"Your mentors will take you around the territory today, and then you can make your nests in the apprentice's den. Meeting dismissed."

I started padding over to the others, but Shadeheart called me back. "Maplepaw, we're going by ourselves." Despite knowing he was a decent cat, I gulped. The second biggest cat in the clan was taking me around the territory. Alone. Where no one could hear or see me.

Yeah, a bit freaky.

Once we were a decent distance away from camp, he started talking. "We can join up with the other later. But I wanted to talk to you where they can't hear us." He turned to me. "Despite what it may seem, I chose you, not your mother. It's been awhile, Maple."

Everything in my mind at once clicked.

Of course! I do know him! But back then his name wasn't Shade, it was Night. No wonder he looked familiar.

"We both know of your rivalry with Moon. Now, I use my size in battle, so I can't teach you with that, but I can teach you speed. In case you were wondering, yes, I also have an ability. I saw you with your roots."

Shadeheart stepped into a shadow, and immediately disappeared.

"Woah."

"Woah is right. It's pretty powerful tactic to confuse enemies. Each clan has three cats from back when we were in our first life. Sometimes two evil, sometimes two good. Depends on the strength of the other cats."

"Do you know all of them?"

He nodded and continued on. "Thunderclan: you, me, and Moon. Two good. Riverclan: Heron, Lion, and Rose. Two evil. Windclan: Swift, Dahlia, and Pebble. Two evil. Shadowclan: Stone, Dusk, and Ice. Two good. Skyclan: Flame, Sparrow, and Ivy. Two evil."

"So they overpower us?"

"In numbers. In skill, I don't know. Starclan has told me that there is another out there somewhere that will balance us out. Then it comes down to pure will."

I nodded in understanding. "Can we go group up with the others now?" He nodded and led the way.

After a long day of touring the territory, we all came back wiped out. Sandtail came up to us. "The other apprentices knew that you would be tired, so they made your nests for you."

We all let out a large sigh of relief. I went into the den and chose the nest as far away from Moonpaw as possible. Thrushpaw and Frostpaw laid down next to me, and Goldenpaw just on the outside, a bit closer to Moonpaw.

I took a quick look over to where Moonpaw was laying. He was looking straight at me.

So it begins then.

Yeah, it does. And don't expect me to go easy on you.

Of course not. It wouldn't be fun then.

Uh huh. More telepathy.

By the way, the first telepathy thing was Maple.

That one was over 1500 words. I've decided how long the book is going to be, and how many chapters each character is going

to get.

If everyone who currently has an OC in this book could PM me their character's details, that would be largely appreciated.

This series is going to be mainly Maple and Thunderclan. He is the main character, but his allies will also have some parts.

The answer to the last riddle was A River.

Riddle time!

Mr. and Mrs. Cat have six daughters. Each daughter has one brother. How many people are in the Cat family?

See y'all soon!

-Maple

Chapter 8 - Heron

My rivalry with Lionkit was only increasing as we grew closer and closer to becoming apprentices. We would always sleep with Springkit between us, we would eat opposite ends of fresh-kill, and we would always be on opposite sides when we had play-fights.

Today was the big day, the day we would become apprentices. Lionkit and myself both were very large. We were almost as tall as warriors, although our muscles weren't as developed. We also didn't have the skill that warriors have.

Springkit was average height for a kit, about as tall as Ravenpaw. She was more agile, and was much smarter than us.

At least I have the brains to recognize that. Unlike someone I know.

I was the only one of my family awake. Mouseclaw was sleeping with her newborn, Frostkit. Lionkit and Springkit were still curled up in the crevice of Riverflower's stomach.

I poked my head outside, temporarily blinded by the sunlight. There weren't many cats out and about. I saw a group of cats heading out for a patrol, and Kinkfur padding back over to the leaders den, just finished with sorting out patrols.

I turned back into the nursery to see everyone slowly waking up. Lionkit was the first on his paws, as per usual. He looked straight at me while he was stretching, and then padded over to me.

I feared the worst, but all he said was, "Decent day?"

I gave a silent sigh, and replied. "Yeah."

"Good, wanna play some mossball when the other finish waking up?"

Keeping my facade up, I excitedly replied, "Yeah! That sounds like fun."

Springkit rose from her paws, stretched, and then pawed at Riverflower. "Ma? Can we go outside and play?"

Riverflower blearily blinked her eyes open, shaking her head before turning to Springkit. "How about you wait a little while? Hailstar said that your ceremonies would be held rather early today."

Springkit lit up with excitement. "Oh yeah! I completely forgot that we had our apprentice ceremonies today!" She turned to us, "Guys! We have our apprentice ceremonies today!"

Lionkit and I responded in unison. "We know."

Springkit's face turned into a pout, "You guys ruin my fun." Then she turned back to Riverflower, "Ma, why did I have to get two brothers?"

Lionkit quietly whispered to me, "I feel like it's more of a case where we ended up with her." I snickered.

"I don't know, Springkit. I guess it's Starclan's decision."

"Then Starclan must be pretty stupid."

"..."

"..."

"..."

Everyone dead-paned.

"Springkit, I-Just-ugh. Springkit, Starclan has a reasoning for everything. If they wanted you to have to brothers, then there's probably a reason why. Maybe you can stop all their fighting or something."

"Or SOMETHING? What do you mean 'Or SOMETHING'?"

Riverflower was clearly still to tired to deal with this. "You know exactly what I meant. Now go outside and do something before I claw my eyes out."

Frostkit had apparently woken up, and was watching us as we had our feud. "Can we just play some mossball or something behind the nursery? I just woke up and I don't feel like listening to all of you."

Mouseclaw lifted her head behind Frostkit. "And I'm still waking up. Please just play outside."

I rolled my eyes and padded out, quickly followed by Lionkit, while Springkit and Frostkit were slow, talking amongst themselves.

The instant we were behind the nursery, out of view from everyone, Lionkit jumped on my back, surprising me, so I feebly fell over.

"Lionkit! W-What are you doing?"

"Better to take care of you know than later, *Heron."* He unsheathed his claws, and got ready to strike me. The other paws were pinning me down, except for one that was cutting of my windpipe. All I could do was close my eyes, and hope for the best. Lionkit was technically older than me, and had spent more of his time fighting against trees than I had.

"Hey guys! What are you doing?" Frostkit and Springkit had appeared, and just in the nick of time. Before they could see anything, Lionkit quickly retracted his claws, and instead of slashing me, he just cuffed me on the head.

"Oh, nothing. We were play-fighting while we waited for you guys."

Yeah, that's what we were doing.

"Really? I thought we were playing Mossball?"

Lionkit responded again, "We still can if you all want to."

Oh, really.

"Sure! I'll grab a ball from our nest." With that, Springkit ran inside.

Frostkit turned and followed her, but not before giving one last confused look to Lion and myself.

When Frostkit was gone, Lion turned to me. "You were lucky this time, but next time, they won't be there to but in. And we both know I'm stronger than you. It'll be your demise."

I put up a scared face, giving him the assumed satisfaction of scaring me, but inside I was very calm.

Well, as calm as one can be when your brother threatens to kill you.

I knew that our side had the better chance of winning. We had beat them before in the previous life, but not without a bit of struggle. Plus, even if they've learnt new tricks while in the Dark Forest, we'd learnt some new ones in StarClan.

Also, Lion's bravery was because of his confidence in his strength. My bravery was just confidence in myself. So if I were to become stronger than him, he'd lose his bravery, as well as his confidence.

An easy win for us.

Go team.

Springkit and Frostkit quickly returned with the ball of moss. They were walking in a very awkward manner, each side-stepping as they passed each other the ball.

After Frostkit received it, she passed it to me, whereas I passed it to Lion, and so on.

As we would pass, we made remarks to each other such as: "That was a *great* pass" and "You're so bad at catching!"

Well, mainly just between my litter mates and myself. Frostkit was still a wee bit shy, so she barely spoke.

"All cats who are old enough to swim, please gather beneath the River Rock for a clan meeting!"

The yowl that was sent around the clearing made me jump, and I was way off in my pass to Lion. "Our apprentice ceremonies! Let's hurry!" Springkit ran away towards the clearing.

I trotted up, right in between Springkit and Lionkit. Springkit was shaking in excitement, and Lionkit was calm. *Seeing as he's done this before, I'm not surprised.*

I'll propose a truce, so long as you spread it to your friends. It wouldn't be satisfying to kill you as an apprentice.

I looked over to Lionkit in surprise. Maple had told me something about this in one of our shared dreams, yet it still caught me off guard.

"Springkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice. From this moment on, until you become a warrior, you will be known as Springpaw." Hailstar looked quickly around the clearing deciding on a suitable mentor. "Streamtail. You are ready for another apprentice. You trained Rosefrost well, and I hope you pass down the same skills to Springpaw." Streamtail made her way over to Springpaw, where they touched noses.

As the two made their way back into the crowd, the clan shouted, "Springpaw! Springpaw! Springpaw!"

Next, Hailstar turned to me. "Heronkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice. From this moment on, until you become a warrior, you will be known as Heronpaw." He took another quick look at the clan. "Mistheart, despite your young age, you've proven yourself over and over again. You will be Heronpaw's mentor. Please pass down all you know."

"I'll do my best, Hailstar." The serious-looking tom padded over to me, bent down, and touched his nose to mine.

"Heronpaw! Heronpaw! Heronpaw!" Mistheart and myself padded back into the crowd.

I closed my eyes, trying to think about how Mistheart would teach me. He was big, so he could teach me with strength, and as far as I knew, he was decently smart as well. This could help in the long run, especially in understanding someone like Maple.

Of course, doing this, I missed most of Lionkit's ceremony.

"Rosefrost, you will be Lionpaw's mentor. You have proven your strength many times, and I hope you pass that down."

Rosefrost responded with a smirk, and touched noses with Lionpaw.

"Lionpaw! Lionpaw! Lionpaw!"

Greypaw padded up to me. "Welcome to apprenticeship Heronpaw! I've already made a nest for you, and I hope we can become good friends!"

I smiled at the tom. The way his eye glinted reminded me of someone I had met in Starclan...

"Hey, Greypaw, I've got a game to play. I'm going to give you a warrior's name, and you're going to give me a bit of their backstory. Deal?"

"Yeah, sure! Can we go to our nests first?" I gave him a nod.

Once we had settled down, I started listing off a few names. He nailed pretty much all of them. I had loosened him up, so now was the time to strike. "What about the warrior Silverstream?"

"Oh, I know that one! She had saved someone from a river, where they exchanged glances. They went on to become lovers, and had two kits. Silverstream died, though."

It was barely noticeable, but there was small, tiny drop of water running down his face.

Bingo.

I actually don't know if cats know what bingo is, but it fits, so screw logic.

Thanks to @kiitsunestarz for bullying me through the last few hundred words.

T-T

Anyway, sorry for not updating in so long! I've gotten busy with high school, and never really had time. I had the day off today though.

I'm not gonna do a riddle today, or a question. Sorry.

No set date for the next chapter.

See you next time.

-Maple

Chapter 9 - Swift

"Doepaw! Doepaw! Doepaw!" The grey she-cat disappeared into the crowd with her mentor, Cinderface.

My turn was coming up. Stagkit was the next one called up by Gorsestar, where the apprentice ceremony process was repeated. Stagki-paw was given Crowear as his mentor. "Stagpaw! Stagpaw! Stagpaw!" I was chanting, but it was quiet. I was having flash-backs of my previous life.

I was trying to sleep, but I couldn't hold my excitement for the next day's events. My apprentice ceremony!

I could hear my parents talking to each other, whispering so that they didn't disturb anyone.

"Rain, don't you think she's to small? She's barely the size of a 4 moon-old kit!"

"Bramble, don't you remember how small your littermate was? They're basically the same size! And look at your brother now, he's almost bigger than you!"

I was still a kit at the time, so I didn't really process what they were saying. I went up to them, and asked, "Mom? Dad? What're you guys talking about?"

My mother, Rain, responded. "Nothing, Swift. Go on, go back to bed. It's your big day tomorrow!"

My parents continued whispering throughout the night. I barely got any sleep, and slept in well past sun-high the next morning. The previous night's events only came back to me during my Apprentice Ceremony:

"Swift, we're sorry, but your apprenticeship has been delayed by popular

request."

I came to surprisingly quickly, just in time to see Finchkit walk up to the rock. What was even more surprising, is that Gorsestar stepped back from the head of the rock.

Blackleaf walked up in place of him. "Clanmates, as many of you know, I am growing old, and I won't live forever. So it is time I took on an apprentice.

"Finchkit, do you accept the position of Medicine Cat Apprentice?"

Finchkit paused here, and took a deep breath. "I do."

"Then, until you become a full medicine cat, your name will be Finchpaw."

The clan shouted out, excited at the idea of a new medicine cat. "Finchpaw! Finchpaw! Finchpaw!"

"At the next half-moon, Finchpaw with travel to the Moonpool, to meet the other medicine cats and be accepted by Starclan." Blackleaf then leapt down to us, where he touched Finchpaw's nose with his own.

Next, Gorsestar turned to Dahliakit. "Dahliakit, you, like your friends, have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to become an apprentice." Dahliakit's eyes gleamed as she looked up to where Gorsestar stood. "From this moment on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Dahliapaw." After taking a quick look around the clearing, Gorsestar returned his gaze to Dahliapaw. "Foxflame, you have been a great asset to the clan, and you are known for your quick thinking. I hope you will pass down all you know to Dahliapaw."

As Foxflame trotted up to touch noses with Dahliapaw, the clan shouted out in excitement, "Dahliapaw! Dahliapaw! Dahliapaw!"

At last, the leader turned to me. "Swiftkit." He gave me a smile. "You have reached the age of six moons and are ready to become an apprentice."

Those few words calmed all of my nerves immediately. I wouldn't be held back, like last time!

"From this moment on, until you have received your warrior name, you will be known as Swiftpaw." There weren't many cats left for taking on apprentices, so Gorsestar didn't have to look around the clearing. "Honeyheart. You have proven yourself to be a compassionate and strong she-cat. I hope you will pass down all you have learned to Swiftpaw."

"With pleasure, Gorsestar." Honeyheart took her time coming over to me, although it wasn't that long, seeing as she was standing only a few tail-lengths away. "I look forward to mentoring you, Swiftpaw." Honeyheart smiled down at me.

I looked back up at her, and smiled as well. *This is* really *where it starts. The apprentice ceremony. My first step towards greatness.*

"Swiftpaw! Swiftpaw! Swiftpaw!" The clan's yowls rang out around the hollow. I disappeared into the mass of cats, immediately being swallowed up.

"Swiftpaw! We're finally all apprentices!" Doepaw was beaming, and standing next to Stagpaw and Dahliapaw.

"Yeah! I was just surprised that Finchkit decided to become a medicine cat!" I sat down in front of them, not beaming, but happy nonetheless. *Even if this is the beginning of my path.* I stole a quick glance to Dahliapaw. *It is also the beginning of her- OO IT'S HAREPAW!!!*

The white tom was padding over to us. When the other three saw where my eyes were pointed, the turned as well. "Harepaw!" Stagpaw exclaimed.

"Hi guys! Welcome to apprenticeship!" Harepaw settled down right next to me. I paid no mind to what Harepaw was saying. *OH STARCLAN, HAREPAW IS SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO ME! I'M GONNA PASS OUT!*

Harepaw stood up as a shadow loomed over us. "Hello there." the

shadow said.

Wait, shadows don't talk!

At least I think they don't...

I turned around to see massive forelegs right behind me, and had to look up to see the tom in the face. "Molefoot! What are you doing here?"

He gave us a small smile. "Your mentors asked for you. You guys are going out to see the territory."

"Yay!" Doepaw squealed.

We jogged over to our mentors, who where standing at the entrance to the camp. "Come on you guys, we've got a whole day of exploring to do!" Cinderface, the cheeriest of the bunch, exclaimed.

We quickly followed them out of the camp, our tiny legs trying to keep up with their strides. The moor was so... vast. You could see as far as the old barn, and as far as the forest, just from the top of the hollow.

Man, it's great to be back. Starclan is great, but I really missed this stuff.

"There aren't any 'landmarks', so we'll take you around the borders, show you some key spots for hunting and training, and then you lot can sleep." Crowear called back to us. From what I've heard, Crowear is the fastest cat in the clan.

That just means some new competition.

I had been the fastest in our old group, the next fastest being Doe. I looked over to where Doepaw was prancing around. She didn't look much like Doe, but they shared a name.

Hm.

"Can you lot smell that?" Honeyheart was looking back at us.

The smell tickled my nose. "Who *can't* smell that? Ew!" Dahliapaw

complained.

"Oh, shush. That smell is Riverclan, one of the other four clans." Honeyheart continued. "I'm going to go ahead and assume you know what the lake is. We won't be able to scent Shadowclan cats, since they are on the other side of the lake, but we'll be able to scent Skyclan and Thunderclan today."

Skyclan? Who's in Skyclan? I thought there were only four cats! There's a fifth?

Standing by the lake, Foxflame said, "This here is the lake. From here," He took a few steps away from the shore, "to here is neutral land. This is so that cat's from other clans can get to Gatherings. It is not neutral hunting land. Honestly, it's Riverclan's territory, since they are the only one who eat fish." I saw Foxflame shudder at the thought.

"Yes, and you all will go to your first gathering sometime in the next couple of moons!" Cinderface exclaimed. I looked around me to see that all the other's eyes were lit up with excitement.

We continued exploring the territory, Crowear stopping every once in awhile to either catch a rabbit or show us a good place to hunt. We finally stopped at a large, wide oak tree that stood out on the plain moorland. "What's this place?" Doepaw questioned.

Crowear answered,"This is the point where the borders of Windclan, Thunderclan, and Skyclan meet. Not many generations ago, Skyclan moved from their old place to here, behind Thunderclan and Windclan."

"Where was their old place?" Stagpaw continued.

Honeyheart responded this time. Pointing with her tail, she said, "Do you see those mountains over there?" I could barely see them, just their tips over the horizon. "Imagine that distance, and then do it around fifteen times. That's about how long the journey is. Or at least, that's what the elders always said."

I could tell that the mountains were already tree-lengths upon tree-

lengths away. Just thinking about the distance made my paws ache.

"I can tell you lot are getting tired. We'll do a quick show of the training hollow's, and then we can head back to camp." Crowear said.

My entire body sighed with relief. I still had the body of a kit, and as long as I did, I would be tired after long walks like this. Once I grew into a normal-sized body, my endurance would increase.

"And this is the training hollow, where you will be spending most of your waking hours as apprentices." Crowear finished, "Unless you lot prove to be troublesome, then you'll be cleaning the elder's ticks for moons."

I shuddered at the thought of being stuck in camp all day. My legs would grow restless and stiff, and I've already had six moons of that.

We entered back into camp through the heather, where Crowear and Cinderface both immediately went to Gorsestar. "They're going to tell Gorsestar how the tour went. Meanwhile, you all can go and get something to eat. You've earned it. After that, you have the remainder of the day to yourselves." Honeyheart explained.

I padded over to the fresh-kill pile, Doepaw and Stagpaw at my side. I grabbed a large rabbit, big enough for all of the new apprentices to share. "Dahliapaw! come and share this rabbit with us!" Stagkit shouted out, nearly across the entire camp to where Dahliapaw was standing.

Dahliapaw quickly trotted over to our little eating-space, and settled down to take a few bites. "Thanks you guys. I needed this."

"We all did! And it's no bother, you're always welcome to share prey with us!" Stagpaw said.

You may regret saying that...

I quickly excused myself, and went over to the Apprentice's den, deciding to get some sleep. There was a single nest that didn't have a cat scent in it.

"You can have that one. I didn't have time to make enough once you got back." I turned around to see Harepaw standing at the entrance to the den. "Plus, it's next to mine!" A smirk steadily grew onto his face.

I nodded in gratefulness, and circled around my nest, finally closing my eyes, and settling into a nice sleep.

That was almost as long as the last chapter of FirepawxSandpaw. Just under 1750.

I know I ended kind of abruptly, but this chapter took awhile, and I wanted to get it out.

There was no riddle last time, or question, so no answer obviously.

I'm also writing this in 1st hour. At school.

I don't have the brain power to think of a question, sorry.

Anyways, see ya next time.

-Maple

Chapter 10 - Stone

"Stonepaw! Get over here! You're patrolling, not sleeping!"

I looked to where the voice came from to see my mentor, Poppyfern. I could already tell that things weren't going to be great in my apprenticeship. Poppyfern was a nice cat, but she had a hard time dealing with me.

Kind of a specialty of mine, not gonna lie.

She was kind in trying to keep Dusk and myself in the same patrols. *I wonder why Dusk was paired with me, anyway. She isn't big, and as far as I know, she wasn't all that strong either.*

I got up and padded over to where Poppyfern was standing, by herself this time. "Stygiastar said she just wanted the two of us to patrol. It'll be quick, we're just heading towards the Riverclan border. We'll see if we can catch anything along the route as well."

I nodded in response, and followed her out of the camp. Once we were a good distance from camp, Poppyfern turned to me, still walking. "Stonepaw, I'm sorry if I come off as rude, but is there a reason you're always so difficult?"

I tilted my head in thought, not looking towards Poppyfern. "I don't know if there's an exact *reason*, but I've never really been social. I guess it's just hard for me to trust people."

She nodded. "Do you trust me?"

"Well, I trust you more than I trust a lot of others, but I can't put all of my trust on you. I've seen you've tried to put Duskpaw and myself on the same patrols, and that really helps."

"Do you want me to continue putting you two on the same patrols?"

I shook my head slowly, "While I really appreciate the effort, try not to. The reason is personal, but we honestly have a long-standing

rivalry."

"How long-standing could it be? You're barely 8 moons old!"

"You'd be surprised."

By this time, we had reached the border with Riverclan. The overwhelming scent of fish filled my nostrils, making me gag. *I feel bad for Heron. He's probably gotten used to it by now, but Starclan, that stuff stinks.*

We trekked along the border, occasionally stopping every time we scented a mouse or vole. Near the end of the patrol, Poppyfern suddenly stopped. "Riverclan patrol coming. Act normal, and don't screw anything up. We don't want to get into a fight."

I turned back to look at the border, and saw three cats coming our way. *A blue-grey cat, and two white cats. That small one looks a lot like Heron.*

"Mistheart, Snowface, how are you?" Poppyfern Said

"We're doing well Poppyfern, thanks for asking." Snowface responded. "Who's the apprentice?"

"This is my apprentice Stonepaw. He's a little over 8 moons, and progressing very nicely through his training. He shows great potential."

Mistheart responded this time, "I would expect nothing less. This here is my apprentice Heronpaw. He's also a little over 8 moons, and is doing well."

Heronpaw and myself locked eyes, and continue the stare for awhile, until he smiled. "Good to see you, Stone." He whispered.

"Same to you. Have you seen any of the others?"

"No, but Lion is my brother. He's already tried to kill me once. I wouldn't put it past him to do it again soon. What about you?"

"I got Dusk as my sister. I don't know why she was born with me,

we don't have much in common."

Heron's eyes showed confusion. "Well, you have similar minds, right? And you're both intimidating, so there's that."

While he was right, there wasn't that much of a similarity in appearance. I had deep brown fur, while Dusk had creamy golden fur. She was a lot smaller than me as well, and it showed even now. Our only physical similarity was our eyes, which could kill a hawk with a single glance. Her's were emerald green, unlike mine, but they were still very piercing.

"Stonepaw! We've got to leave, it's almost sun-high!" Poppyfern was still standing by the others, but they looked as if they wanted to leave as well. Heron and myself exchanged one last nod, and padded back to our mentors. Poppyfern turned to leave, and I followed.

"You seemed especially friendly with Heronpaw." Poppyfern told me, not looking back.

I needed to come up with a believable excuse. While the truth would surely be out eventually, I didn't want it to be now.

"He was friendly, so we talked for awhile."

"Oh, really? What about?"

She's sounds like my mother. "I don't see why you could care, but really just about our training, and finding each other next Gathering."

"Right, I almost forgot they had to cancel the gathering because of the lightning. This one coming up will be you first!" I nodded.

I was undoubtedly excited for my first Gathering. "I hope the others will be there", I whispered under my breath.

"Who? And how do you know others?" Poppyfern was still walking next to me.

Fox-dung.

"What? I didn't say anything."

"Stop." I stopped moving. "Tell me. *Now.*"

Aside from Stygiastar and Jackalfur, she's the cat I trust the most. And I assume having someone know could be a good thing.

But how would I show her?

Wait, that may work...

I sighed, and started padding towards Thunderclan territory. "Follow me."

The Moonpool. If I get to Starclan, I can show her.

"Where are we going, Stonepaw?" Poppyfern questioned.

"You'll see."

We had just crossed into Thunderclan territory. "We need to stay close to the shore." I told Poppyfern. "If we come across a patrol, say that we were going to ask Windclan about something."

I really hope we don't come across anyone.

Once we were about halfway across Thunderclan territory, I heard paw-steps. "Quick!" I whispered to Poppyfern. "Get behind that rock." We sneaked towards the rock, making sure to keep our steps light. I poked my head out and around the rock.

The bushes by the lakeshore rustled, and out stepped a Tortoiseshell cat.

Hmm, looks a lot like Maple.

The cat picked his head up and looked around. "Who's there?"

The cat couldn't've picked up our sent, we were downwind. And there were no bushes to rustle. That meant that the only way the cat heard us...

Are you telepathic?

"Yes", the cat said. "Now come out so I can see you! I won't harm you, I'm only an apprentice."

"Why did the cat say yes?" Poppyfern whispered.

"Because I asked if they were telepathic. C'mon, don't keep him waiting."

We went around the stone and into the cat's view. The cat opened up their mouth to taste the air. "Shadowclan? What are you doing on- wait, Stone?"

The cat must have seen my surprised look, because they followed up with, "It's me, Maple!"

Ah, so I was right.

That's not common. Telepathy. Myself and Moon can both do it.

"It's great to see that you two know each other, but how do you know each other?" Poppyfern was standing a little farther away, and clearly was confused.

Maple, I'm going to show her. You're coming with us. It'll be easier that way.

Sounds good, my mentor let me have the day off. I'll say I was just exploring.

"Doesn't matter, Poppyfern. Just follow us."

We continued along the lakeshore, Maple telling me all about his life in Thunderclan. "My mentor is Night, by the way."

I froze. "The Night from back then?" Maple nodded.

"He also told me that each clan has three cats from the past. Sometimes two are on our side, like Thunderclan, but sometimes two are on the other side, like Riverclan."

"I met Heron today. Looks like he's going to have his paws full." I continued walking, aware of the dumbfounded Poppyfern behind

us. "Anyways, what about Shadowclan?"

"He just said Ice. I don't know the rest of his name."

"Icetooth."

"Oh. He's a good warrior."

By this time, we had arrived the Moonpool clearing.

"The Moonpool? Stone, why here- oh."

"Looks like your wits have kept up with you." I smirked at him.

"Shut up. C'mon, let's go." He turned to Poppyfern. "What we're about to show you is to be shown to no cat. Except for Icetooth. You can tell him. But he'll already know."

"Oh, that's easy. He's my mate."

"Well, seeing as we're basically twins in appearance, that doesn't surprise me. Looks like we both have a thing for white cats."

I was already halfway down into the clearing by the time they started descending. I waited patiently for them to catch up to me, and then we continued to the Moonpool. "Just lay down and touch your nose to the water." Maple said.

I laid down, and touched my nose to the cool water surface, where a feeling of drowsiness suddenly overcame me.

I awoke to a grassy plain with a river not too far away. I turned to see Maple standing near me, and Poppyfern just awaking.

We have to cross that river to show her, right Maple?

Yeah, that sounds right.

"C'mon Poppyfern. We'll show you now."

Maple and I both walked over to the river, waiting for the Poppyfern to catch up. When she did, I took a leap across, and Maple followed. Poppyfern was bunching her hind legs, but I

stopped her. "Don't. Just us."

When I finished those words, I started to feel my body shift. I felt muscles ripple beneath my pelt, and my senses sharpened. My fur flattened out from my kit fluff. I looked over to Maple to see that he had gone through the same changes, but he wasn't nearly as large as me.

I turned my head to look at Poppyfern. Her mouth was agape, and her eyes were gleaming with wonder.

"Man, I hate being short." Maple continued, "In case it isn't obvious, this isn't our first life. Stone and myself are both what you would call 'Ancients'. There are others from the other clans as well. For example, your mate, Icetooth. Back then, he was just called Ice." Maple's memories must have fully returned. My memories were also returning, just a bit more slowly. "He was my brother's mentor. I'd like to see him again. Perhaps at the gathering."

Poppyfern's mouth had closed, and her eyes looked understanding. Which was weird, as you'd think that any cat would be confused out of their minds.

"I guess I'll meet the others in time, then."

Now it was my turn. "Yes, if we meet another cat from the past, I'll tell you. That other apprentice I was talking to was Maple's brother, Heron."

Poppyfern nodded. "Okay, I get it. But we better head home now, Stygiastar will kill us."

'~******~'

"So, you two finally decided to come back. And you reek of Thunderclan." Stygiastar, as intimidating as ever, was standing over us.

"Yeah, sorry about that. Stonepaw chased a squirrel over the Thunderclan border, and a patrol showed up. Luckily, they were understanding, and let us keep the squirrel." She pointed to the squirrel dangling from my jaws.

"And who was on this patrol?"

"Greytail, his apprentice, Reedfeather, and his apprentice."

"Remind me to thank them. I expect better from you, Stonepaw." I bowed my head in shame. "Take that squirrel to Moosewhisker and Fernstorm. I don't think they've eaten yet."

I bowed my head once again in agreement, and padded over to the elder's den, the squirrel bumping against my legs. *It felt great to be big again. I hope I'm that big this time around as well.*

"Oh, hello there Stonepaw! Is that squirrel for us?" Fernstorm was awake, and looking at me, his pleasant amber eyes clashing with my intimidating icy blues. I nodded in response. "Good, I haven't eaten all day. Leave it right there, I'll wake up Moosewhisker and tell her that you brought it."

I dropped the squirrel near Fernstorm, and headed out of the den.

When I poked my head out, I saw Cloudpool heading over to me. When she saw me, she stopped, turned around, and made a beckoning motion with her tail. I saw her disappear back into the Medicine Den, and quickly followed.

When I entered, Cloudpool was standing near the back of the den. "Remind me quickly Stonepaw, tomorrow night is the Gathering, right?" I nodded in confusion. "Okay, Stonecreek, one of Skyclan's Medicine cats, came to me while you were gone and told me to have you sit next to me. I don't know why, but do it, alright?"

So Stonecreek probably knows then... I assume Cloudpool will know in time.

"Yeah, I can do that."

2044 words.

Just let that sink in.

That's the most I've ever written in a chapter. And for my brother's OC.

What have I become?

Anyways, hope you enjoyed! Now Poppyfern knows, the Crew has found a way to show people, and there's gonna be a Gathering! Next up is Flame and Skyclan, and his fire-breathing! Maybe we'll see a bit more out of Sparrow...

Let's see if I can come up with a question... Oh, I know!

My little brother is going to get Wattpad soon, and being the great person I am, I want him to have an Orientation. So, for the One-shot book I'm going to post soon, should I let him write the second chapter?

Yes or No?

Anyways, there's no set date for the next chapter, so until then...

-Maple

Chapter 11 - Flame

I crouched down on the ground, focusing my eyes on my prey. I froze as it moved, and then bunched my hind legs, getting ready to jump. My tail twitching will excitement as I leaped, and landed on the leaf.

"Good, Flamepaw. Remember to keep your tail still as you stalk." My mentor, Raineye, and myself were in the training hollow, and he was teaching me how to hunt on the ground. I already knew how to, of course, but Raineye didn't have to know that.

I puffed my chest out in pride, and pricked my ears as Raineye continued on, "Next we'll practice climbing trees. It's essential for a Skyclan cat, as it can be used both in hunting and in fighting. We use the trees while hunting to stalk tree prey such as birds and squirrels, and we use trees while fighting to drop down on enemies and surprise them, giving us an advantage."

I nodded as Raineye continued on about climbing trees. I could see his age showing in his eyes.

I wouldn't be surprised if he retired to the Elders den after training me.

Raineye was the oldest and one of the most respected warriors in the clan. His mate, Jaypool, retired to the Elders den nine moons ago, just before I was born. I could see that he was longing to be with her. It only made me more determined to work hard and get my warrior name early.

"Flamepaw? Is something on your mind?" Raineye must have caught

me staring off into space.

"Sorry Raineye, I was just thinking about how much I want my warrior name."

"Oh really? What makes you want it so much?"

"Well, aside from the freedom of being a warrior, it's to help you out as well." Raineye widened his eyes in questioning. "You're pretty old, no offense."

"None taken."

"And your mate is already in the Elders den. So if I get my warrior name quickly, then you can be with your mate!"

Raineye's dull eyes brightened will laughter, and he let out a chuckle. "While I appreciate the thought, I can still spend all the time I want with Jaypool. I even sometimes take apprentice duties just to spend time with her." Seeing my saddened face, he said, "But I suppose if I retire to the Elders den, I can spend even more time with her. And I wouldn't have to do any of your duties."

"Well, when you put it that way, I don't know if I want you to go to the elder's den anymore."

Raineye shook with laughter again. "C'mon, let's go find a tree for you to climb."

'~******~'

"Good work today Flamepaw. Go get something from the fresh-kill

pile, and then rest." The glint in Raineye's gaze gave away something, but I couldn't figure out what it was.

Ignoring it, I turned towards the fresh-kill pile, spotting an incredibly large squirrel. I licked my maw, and went over to the pile. I bent down and grabbed the squirrel, mouth-watering smells filling my senses.

I started to head towards a shaded spot beneath a tree, but then someone called, "Flamepaw! Over here!"

I turned to see Yellowpaw relaxing with Ivypaw. I trotted over to them, the squirrel bumping against my legs.

"You actually thought that we would let you eat that entire squirrel by yourself?" Yellowpaw said, her eyes betraying her harsh tone. Ivypaw smiled next to her, and sat up from her laying position.

I dropped the squirrel in front of them. "Well then, dig in." We all tucked into the squirrel, enjoying the savory taste of a fresh-kill.

As I was chewing, I looked around the camp to see if anything was going on. A group was leaving for the Sunhigh patrol, Skystorm was talking to Snowheart by the Warrior's den, and Jaypool was basking in the sun's rays on one of the rocks. Everything was normal.

But then I looked over to the Apprentice's den. I set of Amber eyes were staring into mine, unblinking. The eyes weren't fierce, or determined, but that's what scared me. The eyes were relaxed, cool and collected. And I couldn't look away.

Finally, after a few minutes of staring, the amber eyes broke the gaze. Luckily, Yellowpaw and Ivypaw ceased to notice.

So Sparrow has finally turned. I can't remember what he did. He wasn't big, at least I think.

'~******~'

"... Snowheart, Sparrowpaw, Yellowpaw, and Stonepaw. You all will be attending the gathering."

My face broke into a small smile. Back in my first life, everyone had been in the same group, so there weren't any gatherings. This would be my first official gathering.

Stonecreek's eyes locked with mine, and I remembered that he wanted me to stay by him. *I get to see the other's again. This'll be exciting.*

Everyone dispersed from the quick meeting. I followed Stonecreek over to the medicine cat's den, where Featherflight was snoozing in the sun. "Stay quiet. We don't want to wake Featherflight." Stonecreek snuck past the silver tabby, deep into the den.

I entered the poorly-lit den, and the overwhelming amount of different aromas made me sneeze.

"Allergies?" Stonecreek questioned.

"It's the beginning of leafbare, so yeah, I guess."

"I could give you some tansy, although I don't know how effective that would be."

"Don't worry about it."

Stonecreek nodded. "I was able to get in touch with every medicine cat, except for Finchcloud. She's from Riverclan, so we'll just need to find the Riverclan apprentice that was reborn. I can find Finchcloud" I blinked in understanding, "We normally meet pretty close to the deputies, but since this can't be spread, we're going to meet near the edge of the clearing, closer to Shadowclan territory."

"What about Featherflight?" I questioned.

"She'll be staying back here, just in case someone catches a fever. We need to tell all the other medicine cats not to tell her. She's getting old, she doesn't need more to worry about."

"And medicine cats that have apprentices?"

"Already taken care of. They'll send them to talk with other apprentices."

"You seem to be pretty good at this stuff."

I headed out of the den just as Featherflight entered, and started talking to Stonecreek. The sun was nearing the horizon, which meant we would be leaving soon. I turned towards the warriors den, where Tawnyfur was streched out, enjoy the final moments of the sun. When she saw me coming, she sat up and smiled.

"You're first gathering!"

"Yep."

"I'm not going, so make sure to come back with lots of stories, okay? I expect you to have at least met one friendly cat."

That won't be too hard. I've already got four set up.

I gave my mother a quick lick on her cheek, and turned back to where the cats that were going to the gathering were grouping up.

"Skyclan! We're leaving!" Billystar shouted. A few cats were gathered behind us, and waved their tails in farewell.

As we were nearing the Gathering Island, Stonecreek dropped back to where I was walking. "Try to stay near the back, that way, most cats won't see us." I gave a small nod, and leapt up onto the tree bridge.

Once on the Island, I made my way to the far side, Stonecreek close behind me. We had to stay in the shadows so that cats would have to actually be looking for us to find us.

After only a few minutes of waiting, Stone Swift showed up, with their respective medicine cats trailing behind them. Stone had two more cats shadowing him.

"Flame!" Swift exclaimed.

I smirked and licked her forehead. Swift was my mother in my first life, and it was nice to see her again.

Stone and I locked eyes, and tapped our foreheads together. "It's

good to see you again." I said. Stone nodded in response, staying silent. "Who're they?"

"This is Ice."

"Good to see you again Flame." Ice smiled. I nodded to him.

"And the other?"

"His mate, Poppyfern. Myself and Maple have already told her about everything."

"You've already come in contact with Maple?"

"And Heron. More by chance than anything, but it was nice to see them."

I was quickly introduced to Cloudpool, Stone's medicine cat, and Blackleaf, Swift's medicine cat. I introduced both Swift and Stone to Stonecreek.

"Hey guys!" Maple was trotting towards us with a grin on his face, two cats in tow. "This is my medicine cat, Finchfur, and Night!"

Stone snorted, "You seem excited. And good to see you, Night."

"It's Shadeheart now, but it's good to see you as well."

In my mind I suddenly remembered that I had to retrieve Heron. I looked back at Stonecreek, and I could tell that he had realized the same thing. "We'll be right back, we're gonna go and grab Heron."

After a quick look around, Stonecreek was able to spot Finchcloud, and broke off from my company. Finding Heron would be more difficult. There were a lot of white cats, and I didn't yet know the smell of Riverclan.

I took the wet smell for Riverclan.

River? Wet? Get it?

Practically a genius.

After narrowing that down, I looked for white cats. There were three. one Stonecreek was heading towards, another was obviously female, which only left one more.

I padded over to the white cat, and called out, "Heron!"

The cat looked in my direction, and his eyes grew. I motioned my head in a "follow me" gesture, and started padding back to where we all where.

We returned to see Finchcloud already with the group, and seemingly acquainted. I quickly introduced Heronpaw to the cats that didn't know him. Maple and Heron bumped heads, and Maple gave Heron's cheek a lick. Then they sat down next to each other.

Stonecreek moved to the center of our sloppy circle. "This isn't going to be long, this is mostly just for introductions and becoming familiar with faces. Most of us know the problem that faces us. For those who don't, these seven," Stonecreek motioned his head towards our small group, "have been reborn. However, more have also been reborn. Night?"

"Right. There are three reborn cats from each clan. The ones that aren't here are all evil. That includes Moonpaw, Lionpaw, Rosefrost, Dahliapaw, Pebblesplash, Duskpaw, Sparrowpaw, and Ivypaw.

"Yes, they do outnumber us. But Starclan has recently told me there are more reborns out there that may help us."

Next to me, Heronpaw's eyes lit up. "I'll be right back!" With that, he sprinted off into the crowd.

Heronpaw didn't take his time, and soon reappeared with another apprentice.

"Everyone, this is Greypaw. Formerly known as-"

"Greystripe. I was known as Greystripe."

AAAAAANNNDD CHAPTER 11 FINISHED!!!!

Everyone's finally met each other, and to some of your

suspicions, Greystripe has also returned!

I'M SORRY SORRY IT'S BEEN SO LONG!!! I LOST INTEREST FOR AWHILE!

I tried to get my brother to write, but he was difficult, soooooo... NO CHAPTER'S FROM HIM!!! I'm tryin'a get a cover for that book, once I do, it'll be out!

No question cuz it's 1:00 and I'm hungry. Sowy :(

I'll try to get the next one out soon. Hopefully next week. We're almost halfway trough!!!

Auf Wiedersehen!!!

-Maple

Chapter 12 - Maple

"I was formerly known as Greystripe."

We all sat shocked, some of us with our jaws dropped.

"Honestly, I'm surprised all of you are shocked. You guys are reborn, what's wrong with me being reborn?"

He's got a good point. "Alright, everyone's mouths off the ground, now." Shadeheart said. Everyone quickly picked up their mouths.

"For all of you, here's a bit of information about us." I made a wave with my tail, motioning to the other apprentice reborns, excluding Greypaw. "I'm the smart one. Stone's intimidating, Heron's brave, Swift's Fast, and Flame's strong. All of the ancient reborns also have powers."

"Awww, no fair! I want powers!" Greypaw complained.

I smiled. "I can turn my paws into roots." I gave a quick demonstration.

Shade went next. "I can disappear into thin air in a shadow or when it's night." He disappeared, then reappeared.

"I shoot flames from my mouth." Flame let a small burst of fire into the air.

"I can teleport." Swift started jumping around into different locations, bopping is all on the back of the head.

"I can create anything outta ice." Ice closed is eyes, and a small bird appeared in front of him. "They aren't alive though." Then the bird fell to the ground.

"I can shift the earth." Stone stared at everyone, and then our

platform was lifted up a bit.

Heron didn't continue the conversation. "Uh, Heron? What about you?" Shade said.

"Promise not to make fun of me?" Everyone except for me nodded. He wasn't looking at me, so he couldn't tell.

Suddenly, the fur on his sides separated, and wings sprouted from them. His wings grew, and soon enough, he was hovering above the ground.

"Lookin' beautiful." I teased.

"Maple!!! You promised not to make fun of me!"

"I didn't, you just weren't looking at me." Heron knew that he couldn't argue with me, and closed his mouth.

Swift rolled her eyes. "Sibling rivalries."

Stonecreek snorted. "Alright, the Gathering seems to be coming to a close." He took a quick peek over to the group of cats. "Yeah. Anyways, like Shadeheart said, there are other cats, be sure to pay attention to any suspicious activities. We can't hold this meeting every Gathering, otherwise cats might get suspicious. the medicine cats can talk at the half moon about future meetings. Until then, try not to die, and apprentices, master your powers."

"Thunderclan! We're leaving!" Lynxstar called out.

Myself, Shadeheart, and Finchfur nodded to the group, and left. "That went surprisingly well." Finchfur said.

"Half of us already knew each other, and Stonecreek did a really nice job of keeping things together." I replied.

Finchfur nodded. "So roots, huh?"

"Yup! And I can only guess that the evil cats have similar powers. Sparrow probably also has something to do with wings, like Heron, I would guess Lion's is with his claws, and then Dahlia probably has

something similar to mine, but with vines."

"What about Moon and Dusk?" Finchfur asked.

"I dunno. Maybe something with light for Moon, and darkness for Dusk? And then Pebble can probably mold rocks. Rose will most likely have something to do with thorns, and then Ivy will have a combination of Dahlia and Rose. She'll be strong."

"And you know all this stuff how?"

"It's not that I know it. Our powers are in relation to our names, so why wouldn't theirs be?"

"Good point."

Now Shadeheart joined into the conversation, "You're too smart."

I snorted. "While I appreciate the compliment, there's isn't a possibility for being 'too smart'. I still have to outsmart Moon when the time comes. And we're pretty even."

Shadeheart nodded, and then sped up to get even with the rest of the clan. Finchfur and I trotted to keep pace, and once we reached the clan, silence settled.

"Where were you?" Moon was suddenly next to me.

"I found Heron, so I talked with him for the majority of the Gathering." Moon seemed satisfied with my answer, and dropped back behind me.

After leaving Windclan territory and entering our own territory, the clan stopped. "I know it's late night, and everyone's tired, but leafbare is coming! I want at least two hunting groups to go out right now. Not for long, just do a quick sweep, and then return back to camp." Lynxstar's voice rang around the silent forest.

Now I heard Greytail's voice. "Oceanbreeze, Sunstorm, and Poppypaw, go along the lake, and then head back to camp. Tigerpelt, Maplepaw, and Shadeheart, go along the Windclan border, close to the Moonpool."

I heard groans from a few of the cats, but there was no verbal complaints. I didn't mind going out, it would give me time to think. And hone my hunting skills.

I moved through the group of cats to where Tigerpelt and Shadeheart were waiting for me. We let the rest of the clan go by us, and then Tigerpelt spoke up. "We won't be too long, I can already see how tired you are, Maplepaw."

Just then I realized how tired I really was, and my mind hurt. *Too much thinking.*

We kept a fast pace, only stopping when someone heard a rustle or spotted a lone mouse.

I perked as I caught the scent of a mouse. I turned towards the scent, and circled around it, positioning my body downwind. I lightly stepped as I neared the mouse. *A mouse will feel you before they hear you.*

Now I could see the mouse, nibbling on one of the last berries of a bush. I bunched my hind legs, and took a massive leap towards the mouse, landing on it, and then giving it the killing bite.

"Nice catch Maplepaw! That was a huge jump for someone your size." I deadpanned, and gave Tigerpelt the stare of a lifetime. "This is plenty, especially for leafbare. Let's head back to camp, and then we can get some rest."

We turned back towards camp, accompanied by two mice, a sparrow, and a vole.

As we neared the camp entrance, Shadeheart let Tigerpelt take the lead. "You can sleep in tomorrow. Training won't start until sunhigh."

I sighed in relief. I don't know how much sleep I'm going to get in the first place, tonight was stressful. Seeing everyone again was nice, but the reminder that there are evil cats, one of whom is my brother, is a great life-worsener.

Don't know if that's a word or not, but I'm too tired to care.

I entered camp, dropped my mouse on the fresh-kill pile, and immediately turned towards the Apprentices den. I was drop-dead tired, so I curled up quickly and laid my tail over my nose.

"How was the Gathering?" Frostpaw was up, her hyper self keeping her awake.

I mentally groaned. "It was fine, nothing too exciting. You didn't really miss anything. Did anything happen while we were gone?"

Frostpaw smiled. "Except for Barkfur complaining about his joints again, nothing exciting."

Frostpaw settled down, and closed her eyes. I did the same, but kept my eyes on her outline. *She's such a nice cat. She's no Doe, but she's great.*

I shifted in my nest, and finally closed my eyes. *I wouldn't mind having her as my mate.*

'~******~'

I drowsily opened my eyes to see sunlight filtering through the small gaps in the den. I stood up and poked my head out of the den, looking into the sky. It was still before sunhigh, which means I still had time before training started.

I looked back into the den. Everyone was already awake, I was the last one up.

I walked over to the medicine cat den. "Amberpaw? Finchfur?" I

poked my head into the den.

I saw a tortoiseshell head perk up in the den. "Maplepaw? What do you need?" Amberpaw asked.

"I was looking for some mouse bile. I don't have anything better to do, so I might as well get the elder's ticks."

Amberpaw shook her head. "You confuse me, Maplepaw. A normal apprentice would want to play with their littermates and friends."

I shrugged my shoulders in response. "No one's been getting in trouble lately, so Barkfur and Cloudeye probably haven't had their ticks cleaned off in awhile."

Amberpaw nodded and gave me a small amount of mouse bile. "Remember to clean off your paws when you finished."

"I will. Thanks, Amberpaw!"

"No problem."

I walked out of the medicine cat's den, and headed towards the elder's den. When I entered, I saw Cloudeye wide awake, while Barkfur was sleeping soundly.

"Hello Maplepaw. Have you come to clean our ticks?" I nodded. "Perfect. I can feel one on my left hind leg. Could you take care of it?"

I nodded once again and moved to her flank. I carefully parted her fur with two of my claws, and with my other paw, I moved the mouse bile to where I saw the tick. I placed my mouth over the mouse bile, and waited for a few seconds for the tick to remove itself. When I felt that it had been long enough, I bit down on the leaf, hearing the crunch of the tick being bit into.

"Ah, that feels much better. I can tell I don't have any other ticks, but you may want to check over Barkfur."

I moved over to Barkfur, and after giving him a quick once-over, I headed towards the entrance to the den. "Barkfur's clean. I have

some training with Shadeheart to get to. If you need anything, tell Finchfur or Amberpaw, and then I'll talk to them and help you out."

"I will. Thanks again, Maplepaw!"

I quickly went back to the medicine den to return the leftover mouse bile, and then sprinted out of camp to the nearest stream.

After washing my paws, I jogged back to the entrance of camp, where Shadeheart was already waiting. "Ready?" He asked.

"Yep."

"Alright, let's go."

ANNNNNNNNNDDDDD THAT'S CHAPTER 12! Only four days apart, pretty darn good.

I think that for awhile I'll be able to throw a few chapters out. I have some things going on where I can write.

Don't ask.

Next chapter will probably be up within the next week, no promises though.

Let's see if I can come up with a question....

Oh! What should I call the next book?

I'm not going to give a summary for any ideas, because that would spoil a HUGE plot twist I have planned.

Two, actually.

See ya soon,

-Maple

Chapter 13 - Heron

Nearly 4 moons had passed since we had that meeting at the gathering. Not much changed, other than Greypaw and Ravenpaw becoming Greystripe and Ravenfall, and Frostkit becoming Frostpaw. Frostpaw was apprenticed to my mother, Riverflower.

Myself and Lionpaw had both grown immensely, now the size of warriors. This annoyed a lot of the smaller warriors, especially Streamtail. She was nice, but scary when she was angry.

The great thing was being taller than Hailstar. It's funny when he calls me into his den and he has to look up to me.

He gets real mad when I bring it up, but he isn't as scary as a mean Streamtail.

Gives me nightmares.

I knew that our assessments were coming up soon, because Mistheart would often head straight to Hailstar's den after we returned from a training or hunting session. I was excited, of course, but also freaked out because now Lionpaw and the other's could freely kill us without breaking the truce.

"Heronpaw, we're going out." Mistheart, who was coming from the warriors den, said.

I did one final stretch, and then jogged over to where Mistheart was waiting. "We'll go through some basic combat training, and then if you're comfortable, move on to more complex and deadly moves."

My eyes widened as Mistheart mentioned deadly moves. Yes, I would need them, and yes, I was coming up on my warrior ceremony, but it was still shocking that I was being taught them. I knew how to kill prey such as fish or water-voles, and that move was used for killing cats as well, and Mistheart knew that. That means that there are other, potentially more gruesome moves.

And I don't know if I'm ready for that. Mentally, of course. I know that I'm more than capable physically. I know I'm going to have to grow out of this discomfort, because Lion won't end things until one side is dead.

By this time we had reached the Training clearing. Mistheart moved into the center of the clearing, and I followed.

"Okay, pin me."

I crouched lower to the ground, and slowly circled. I began planning out how to knock Mistheart down. He was bigger than me, so I couldn't rely on my size. He was also quick, so I couldn't rely on speed. The most annoying thing is that he's smart as well, so I basically have no advantage over him.

Mistheart; the Dream Warrior.

This meant that the only thing I could rely on was luck. And luck is a pretty crappy thing to rely on.

What I need to do is unbalance him so that I could knock him over. I have the strength to keep him down, so now the only thing I had to do was outlast him as I ran around.

This makes my head hurt.

"Are you going to keep circling or are you going to pin me?" Here I started running around him, dashing in and out and cuffing him every now and again.

The confused look on his face was a good sign; he had no idea what I was doing. I slowed down my pace a bit, just so that I could run for longer.

After I dashed in and cuffed Mistheart again, he said, "Ow! What are you doing?"

I stopped and tilted my head in confusion. "What?"

"What are you doing! I told you to pin me, not run around!"

"That's what I was getting to!"

"I was going to let you pin me, and then correct it! Great Starclan, you sure look like a warrior, but your brain is a few moons behind!" I flinched at the insult, and Mistheart seemed to notice. "I'm sorry, I know I snapped, but I'm tense. Let's forget about combat for now, and let's go to the river. We'll strengthen your legs today instead."

I followed him to the nearest part of the river, and waded in.

"Okay, swim for as long as you can. Tell me if you need a break." Mistheart said.

I spent the next couple of hours swimming, taking a few breaks when I needed them. I finally swam back to the shore when Mistheart called me, and we left, passing by a patrol on our way back to camp.

"See if Brambleleaf or Fishface need anything. If they don't, the rest of the day is yours."

"Okay. See you tomorrow." I went over to the elder's den and poked my head in. "Do you guys need anything?" I looked around to see both elder's sound asleep.

I'll take that as a not yet. I'll come back later.

I decided instead to go to my nest, and to take a quick nap before Brambleleaf and Fishface woke up.

'~******~'

"Get up."

I slowly opened my eyes, expecting to see Mistheart in front of me, but instead I saw a cat I didn't recognize. I tilted my head in confusion.

"Don't worry about who I am. We'll meet again soon enough. Just know that your kin isn't in as much of a predicament as he thinks."

And then the cat disappeared.

New record for quickest Starclan meeting?

I woke up, and quickly stood to groom myself. *My kin isn't in as much of a predicament as he thinks? That's simple. Something about Lion... How is he in a predicament though? He has Rosefrost on his side, so they outnumber me.*

I shook the thought off for the time being, and looked up into the sky. It was nearing sunset, which reminded me that I needed to check on the elders. I jogged over to their den, and poked my head in once again. "Do you two need anything?"

Brambleleaf responded, "If you could grab us a fish to share, that would be greatly appreciated."

I nodded and back out of the den, turning towards the fresh-kill pile. As I bent down to pick up one fo the largest fish, my nose bumped into a pale-red nose. I backed away to see none other than Rosefrost next to me.

She looked at me cooly, and said, "Watch where you put your nose, Heronpaw." And then she walked away.

That wasn't a weird interaction. Not at all...

I padded back over to the elder's den, and went in, dropping the fish at their paws.

"Took you long enough. I thought I'd be dead by the time you got back." Fishface said, tucking into to eat.

"You know he's joking with you, Heronpaw. Thanks for the fish." Brambleleaf gave me a pleasant smile as I exited the den once again.

The sun was halfway behind the horizon already, so I decided I would head back to my nest, and go to sleep early so that I could wake up early the next morning for training.

As I lay down, I thought about the message Starclan gave me once again. *Lion's in a predicament? Is something wrong with him or Rosefrost? A sickness? Something going on in his training?* I then remembered something from our past life. *Is he not confident in his strength? That must be it!*

But then I realized something odd... *That cat also said something about meeting again, which was especially strange. Is he going to give me another message soon? That's probably what it is...*

I shivered as I curled up. Leafbare was officially here, which meant cold nights and less prey. I would probably be sharing a lot of my prey with other cats. Mistheart was lucky that the part of the river I swam in wasn't frozen over yet. It would be soon, which means that we would have to resort to other types of strength training.

I finally closed my eyes and allowed my mind to rest, even though thought's were still pouring in my brain, sneaking in through the back door.

'~******~'

I awoke very early, the sun hadn't even fully risen yet, it was just a sliver over the horizon. I continued into the center of camp to see Riverflower sitting guard.

She gave me one of her signature smiles. "You're up early. Did you sleep well?"

" I slept fine. I'm up early because I feel asleep before night."

"Ah."

We sat in silence for awhile, waiting for the rest of the clan to wake

up.

"What's going on between you and Lion?"

This caught me off guard, and I stumbled for an acceptable answer. "Just a bit of sibling rivalry. We're just trying to be better than each other."

Riverflower seemed content with the answer, and yawned. "I'm going to take a nap. I've been sitting here all night."

She stood and stretched, and then padded over to the warrior's den. I took her place, and sat guard.

The next person awake as Kinkfur, the deputy. "Where's Riverflower? I thought she was taking guard?"

"She was, but I woke up and took her spot a few minutes ago. She just went back to the warrior's den to get some sleep."

"Oh alright." Kinkfur went back to the warrior's den, presumably to wake up the dawn patrol.

Just as Kinkfur entered the den, I heard a screech, and then another.

My head turned toward the nursery, where the sound was coming from. I turned my eyes back towards the warrior's den, where Kinkfur had also exited.

I sprinted to the nursery, Kinkfur close behind me.

Mouseclaw was bent over something. "Frostkit's been killed!"

My eyes widened in shock.

"Someone came in and just killed her!"

Kinkfur immediately took charge. "Did you see who it was?" Mouseclaw shook her head. Kinkfur nodded and moved his paw to Frostkit's throat. "No pulse. She's dead." Mouseclaw let out another wail of grief.

"Heronpaw, go get Finchcloud. She'll prepare Frostkit for burial. And grab your mother while you're at it."

I nodded solemnly and went over to the Medicine cat's den. Finchcloud was still sleeping, so I gently shook her to wake her up. "Kinkfur needs you in the nursery. Frostkit's been killed."

Finchcloud's eyes widened in shock, but she nodded. "Okay. Thanks for letting me know."

I headed over to the warrior's den to wake Riverflower up, but she was already up and sprinting to the nursery.

I decided to change direction, and moved towards Hailstar's den. I also shook him awake, and whispered, "Frostkit's been killed. Just thought you'd want to know so that you can tell the clan."

Hailstar jumped to his paws, and jogged out of the den. "Thanks Heronpaw. If you will, please, go wake everyone up so that I can break the news."

I nodded, and headed over to the apprentice's den to start waking everyone up.

Dang, I'm on a roll with chapters. That one was just over 1,700 words. Not bad.

I'm not going to ignore Frostkit's death, of course.

RIP.

I get the feeling that less and less people are reading this book. There were no answers on the last question, so I have to come up with a name on my own.

Meanies.

The good thing is that now I don't have to come up with questions until someone starts bullying me into it.

WE ARE OFFICIALLY MOST OF THE WAY THROUGH THIS BOOK! The total chapter count will be 19, meaning 17 chapters

of actual storyline.

Imma message someone and try to get 'em to do a cover for me, and if they do, expect a new reader-powered book coming soon!

See ya soon!

-Maple

Chapter 14 - Swift

Today was my Warrior's Assessment.

No one's actually told me yet, but I can tell because of all the supportive looks I've been getting from cats in the clan. Honeyheart had also been giving me subtle hints, such as talking about my future when I'm a warrior.

And good Starclan, was I scared out of my mind.

If my Warrior's Assessment was today, that means that most of the other reborn's assessments are today. Which means that the truce we made when we had just turned apprentices was officially over, and death was no longer prohibited.

Well, frowned upon, but we can't call one of our deaths 'unfair'.

While I was thinking, Honeyheart had walked over to me, and was now standing in front of me. "Are you ready?" I gave the she-cat a nod. "Good. The other's are already waiting for you. They'll meet us at the training hollow. Follow me."

We started heading to the training hollow, keeping a quick pace. "Are you nervous?" Honeyheart asked.

I decided to be truthful. "Yep."

"Don't be. I know you'll do just fine. Just remember what I taught you and you'll be the star apprentice today." I gave Honeyheart a feeble smile at these words. I know she was trying to help, but she didn't understand the deeper meaning behind becoming warriors. Which was fine, I wasn't going to blame her for it.

We finally reached the training hollow, where all of the other

apprentices, minus Finchpaw, of course, were waiting for us.

"Someone took their time." Crowear complained.

"Sorry, Crowear. I guess we were a bit slow." Honeyheart responded

Now that was a lie. We had kept a fast pace the entire time. The others were just early. I assume that Honeyheart just didn't want to start any squabbles.

"Shall we get started?" Foxflame inquired.

Cinderface nodded. "Yeah." She turned to the apprentices, "We'll be testing you not only on your strength in fighting, but also in your hunting skill and cunning. Since there are so many of you, we'll be splitting into groups. Swiftpaw and Doepaw, you'll start in the training hollow with Crowear and Foxflame. Dahliapaw and Stagpaw, you'll be with myself and Honeyheart."

Stagpaw raised his tail. "Why aren't we taking our assessments with our mentors?"

"Your mentor already knows all of your skills, and could possibly show bias when we report to Gorsestar," Foxflame responded, "So none of you will have your mentor in your group."

We split up into our respective groups, and the Dahliapaw's group headed out into the forest.

Crowear turned to face us. "We'll start you two with sparring while they hunt. Doepaw, Swiftpaw, head to opposite sides of the hollow, and we'll begin."

I slowly moved over to the south side of the hollow, breathing heavily. I don't know why I was so nervous, I had done this before and had done fine.

"On the drop of my tail, you may begin." Foxflame said, "Are you two ready?" We both nodded. "Three, two, one..."

Foxflame extended the pause to way longer than it should've been. Doepaw looked over to him in confusion.

Big mistake.

Foxflame finally dropped his tail, and I sprang towards Doepaw, my tail streaming out behind me, lips pulled back in a menacing manner.

I slammed into the she-cat, tumbling over with her towards the edge of the hollow. When I was finally able to maintain some stability, I stood, pinning her. Doepaw churned her hind legs against my stomach, trying to execute a move we've been taught so many times.

Some of Honeyheart's advice came back to me. *Winning a battle isn't all physical. You need to beat your opponent mentally as well. When you have them pinned, scare them.*

Remembering this, I growled in Doepaw's face, attempting to play a mind game with her. Suddenly, her churning rate increased drastically.

I must have messed something up with my stance, as Doepaw quickly pushed me backwards and off balance. Doepaw quickly pinned me, but I overpowered her and sprang away.

"Okay, you two can stop." Crowear said. I was visibly disappointed, and the black tom noticed. "You both did very well. Swiftpaw, that was an amazing start, and Doepaw, great job getting out of Swiftpaw's pin. I have many good things to tell Gorsestar."

"However", Foxflame stepped in, "There were some mistakes you both made, that if fixed could help you in the future. Doepaw, at the beginning of the match, you let the delayed start distract you, which is why Swiftpaw was able to knock you down in the beginning.

"And Swiftpaw, your reaction time was very quick when I dropped my tail, and that's a good trait to have. However, I saw that you were trying to scare Doepaw. I understand that you were trying to put forth what Honeyheart has taught you, but I think she may have worded what she was trying to say wrong. She said that you should try to scare your opponent, right?"

I nodded in response.

"That's not necessarily a good idea. Not to bore you, but scaring someone raises their levels of adrenaline, and that heightens their senses and reaction time. I believe that Honeyheart meant that you should play mind games. You should try to get into your opponent's head. Mess with them, touch into their personal thoughts. Doing that distracts them from whats staring them right in the face."

I nodded once again in understanding.

Crowear returned to speaking. "Don't take this as an insult. You both did very well, and although it was a very short fight, we both saw all we needed to make half of the decision.

"Next we'll move onto hunting. You'll both be sent on your own into the territory. It is..." With this Crowear looked up into the sky. "It's a bit after sunhigh. We'll give you two three hours to catch as much prey as possible. Remember to not slack off, we'll always be watching you."

Both myself and Doepaw responding with a quick "Okay!" and went on our way. I noticed that Doepaw went out towards Thunderclan territory, so I headed in the almost opposite direction, towards Windclan.

I padded through our grassland-like territory, keeping my eyes trained on the land surrounding me for any prey. As I did this, I delved into my thoughts.

I wonder how Dahliapaw is doing. Has she finished hunting yet? Will she pass? It is Leaf-bare. Hunting will be hard! If Dahliapaw or one of the others doesn't pass their assessment, does that extend the truce, or is just that cat safe for the time?

As I finished up my last thought, I noticed a small hare prancing around in the snow. I scanned the surrounding, looking for possible trees or objects to blend in with. Finding none, I crouched low to the ground and started stalking towards the unsuspecting hare.

I wanted to get as close to the hare as possible before I leapt after it.

I moved very slowly, trying my best to not make noises on the snow.

After another painfully slow pawstep, I froze, deciding that I was closed enough to make the final leap.

I bunched my hind legs, and leapt.

No!

My front leg slipped out from under me, and I face-planted into the cold ground. By the time I looked up, the hare was long gone. I had just messed up in my warrior's assessment! This could end up being like last time, where I become a warrior way after my siblings and friends!

But then I remembered something: I have new powers! I could use them to catch the hare.

I looked around my surroundings, checking if Crowear or Foxflame were near by. After seeing nothing, I looked back in the direction that the hare had traveled in. While hares zig-zag to avoid, they will normally stay heading in the same direction. I closed my eyes, focused in on that particular direction, guesstimated the distance that the hare had traveled, and started moving my paw forwards.

I opened my eyes just as my paw hit the ground. I had teleported quite a distance away from my original location. I turned, saw the hare, and wasted no time in running after it.

It took me only a short burst of speed to catch up to the hare, and I swiftly slammed my paws down on its neck. I bit the vein on the hare's neck just to make sure that it was dead, picked the hare up, and buried it near a dead tree.

'~******~'

I finally finished my last trip to the training hollow, dragging a surprisingly large squirrel with me. I plopped it down with my other caught prey, and lifted my head back up towards Crowear and Foxflame, panting heavily.

"Great Job you two. You both managed to find a good amount of prey, despite the weather and the amount of time given", Foxflame praised.

We had both managed to catch around four or five prey, which was a large amount, definitely the most I've caught.

"Foxflame and myself have some things to talk about, you two take as much prey as you can back to camp. We'll take the rest back when we finish", Crowear said.

There was a look in Crowear's eyes that unsettled me, but I ignored it.

We nodded our thanks, picked up as much prey as we could, and took it back to camp.

"Wow! You guys caught a lot!" Stagpaw greeted us at the camp entrance, "Let me carry some of that for you."

Doepaw dropped a small vole, and I dropped a young squirrel. "This isn't even all of it." Doepaw explained to her brother, "We had to leave some back with Crowear and Foxflame because there was so much!"

Stagpaw smiled. "Great job! Dahliapaw and I really didn't catch much, but I did manage to catch a thrush!"

Doepaw continued the conversation with Stagpaw as I moved ahead to lead the March back to camp. We had almost arrived, and I was grateful for that. My paws were sore from walking around the

territory and battling. Sleep sounded amazing right now.

Only problem was that I had to become a warrior first. Which was an exciting concept yes, but I don't know if I had the energy to deal with the praise. Or to smile large enough.

By this time we had arrived back at camp. I threw my head up to the sky to see that it was almost dusk, so I decided to not take a nap. Instead I curled up next to Leafpaw as she was eating.

She looked like she wanted to talk to me, but almost immediately after I sat down, Gorsestar called, "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather beneath the Rockpile for a clan meeting!"

The cats of the clan came out of their dens, weariness clearly present in their eyes. "It's about time we made some of our *favorite* apprentices into Warriors."

The clan bubbled with laughter as some of my fellow apprentices rolled their eyes. "Anyways, let's get started. Doepaw, please step forward." I watch Doepaw step froward, her eyes determined and focused. "Cinderface, is Doepaw ready to become a warrior?"

Cinderface was absolutely beaming. "Absolutely!"

"In that case, I, Gorsestar, leader of Windclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code and I commend her to you as a warrior in her turn. Doepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect the clan even at the cost of your life?"

Doepaw took a deep breath. "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Doepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Doefern. Starclan honors your strength and compassion, and we welcome you as a full member of Windclan."

Doefern bent as Gorsestar put her head on Doefern's shoulder, and she licked her shoulder respectfully.

"Doefern! Doefern! Doefern!" The clan shouted around me.

Gorsestar repeated the process for both Stagpaw and Dahliapaw, naming them Staghorn and Dahliaspot. Both fitting names.

"Swiftpaw."

Here we go.

"Honeyheart, is she ready to become a warrior?"

"Mhm."

"Alrighty then. I, Gorsestar, leader of Windclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code and I commend her to you as a warrior in her turn. Swiftpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect the clan even at the cost of your life?"

"I do." My mind was everywhere, trying to comprehend everything that was going on.

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Swiftpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Swiftstorm. Starclan honors your speed and wits, and we welcome you as a full member of Windclan."

"Swiftstorm! Swiftstorm! Swiftstorm!"

I grinned as I respectfully licked Gorsestar's shoulder, and I moved back into the group of cats. Clanmates swarmed me and congratulated me.

I moved past them and let them disperse. I let a breath that I didn't realize I was holding, and opened my eyes to see a face right in front of mine.

"AIEEEEEEE!"

The face smiled and let out a small chuckle. "Did I scare ya?"

"I-HARETUFT! YES!"

"Hehe. sorry, didn't mean to. Anyways, I wanted to congratulate

you on becoming a warrior! Now we can go on patrols together!"

I just stared at him.

"Uhhhh, Swift-?"

"Great Starclan I love you."

"..."

"..."

"Um, what did you say?"

My mind cleared of fog as I realized what I had said. "Oh, uh, nothing!" I shook my head to clear it up more. "Anyways, I'm tired from all the stuff today. I'm gonna head to my nest."

"Okay, goodnight!"

As he walked away, I thought to myself, *Too early. I love him to death, and I only hope that he feels the same, but we're both still young. We have plenty of time. And I need to figure out his stance on the whole, ya know, ordeal.* I started walking back to the apprentice's den, and then realized that I was a warrior now. *Definitely putting my nest next to Haretuft's.*

UGGGGHHHHHHHH That was hard to finish. I wrote the last 1800 words in 5 days. Most of it on the way to and from school. I wanted it to end but I always need to add something else.

BUT 2300 WORDS! NEW RECORD!

And this is for the only character that wasn't originally going to be in the story (I was always gonna have a follower's cat in the story)!

I'm not gonna ignore the obvious. I haven't updated in what, 3-4 months? But I have been seeing how many of you actually read this.

Very, very little. I was the only one who had read the last chapter (from what I know) before early yesterday.

I have absolutely no idea when I'll update next, but I do know that I 100% ship Swiftstorm and Haretuft!

Oh, and sorry for not doing Haretuft's warrior ceremony, I just completely forgot about it until I was writing that last scene.

And @SpiritLeAssassin, I hope you like the names for Doefern and Staghorn! Finchkit will come later.

Anyways, 'til the next,

-Maple

Chapter 15 - Stone

"Alright, you three head to your nests to get some rest, I'll report to Stygiastar." Acornheart said to us.

Poppyfern, Moonstream and I all nodded in response. I went straight over to my nest, and plopped down.

I let out a large groan as my body relaxed into a more comfortable position, and immediately closed my eyes.

Almost as soon as my brain relaxed, I was prodded in the side. "Get up. Meet me by the camp entrance in five minutes."

Ugh, what now?

I dunno.

My body had a quick 'seizure' as I straightened myself. *Maple?! You can reach me from your camp?*

I dunno. I'm at your border.

Why are you-

Warrior's Assessment.

There was a quick moment of silence as I let my brain comprehend what was happening.

Oh. That's probably what I was woken up for.

Yeah. Swift had her assessment yesterday.

YOU CAN REACH-

We both had dawn patrol.

Oh. What's her name?

Swiftstorm.

I snorted audibly. *Fits.*

"Stonepaw! Are you coming or not?'

Foxdung. I have to go. I'll talk with you at the gathering tomorrow.

See ya.

I quickly stretched before standing up, and gave myself a quick grooming. I didn't care much for neat fur, but Poppyfern would have my tail if I didn't keep it orderly.

When I finished, I made may way over to the camp entrance, where Poppyfern was very much annoyed.

"What took you so long?"

"I took my time getting up."

"You're about to take your Warrior's Assessment and you TOOK YOUR TIME?"

I rolled my eyes and let her finish her rant, after which she finally sighed.

"You didn't hear anything I said, did you?"

"Not a word."

What followed was possibly the largest groan to ever come from a cats mouth. "Whatever. You already know what's going on. You hunt, I watch. Go."

I simply turned and left the camp, heading immediately in the direction of the Thunderclan border. I wouldn't be able to talk out loud with Maple, but if I got close enough he may be able to give me some tips.

Unlikely, of course. He's probably heading back towards his camp. And he's also not from Shadowclan.

As I finished up my thinking, the scent of the border flooded my nose. I squeezed my way through a small row of brambles, and emerged on the other side.

After I blinked a few times and shook my head to clear them of brambles, and looked up.

And standing right in front of me was a fat squirrel.

I don't know what I did, but thank you Starclan.

I didn't bother stalking it. It was barely a tail-length away, and had already seen me. We were locked in some sort of staring contest. I have yet to understand as to why the squirrel wasn't running for it's life.

I nearly lost my composure as I heard a short screech.

The squirrel jumped and ran in the opposite direction of the screech.

Which happened to be right into my paws.

I quickly slammed my paw down on it. *That was kind of a gimme.*

You're welcome.

I looked up from the squirrel to see a silver pelt standing in front of me.

"Moon?"

Change it to telepathy. Our mentor's are watching us, remember?

Ah. You can do telepathy as well?

Correct.

It must have looked very weird to Moon's mentor, seeing their apprentices just looking at a Shadowclan apprentice.

Poppyfern hopefully knew what was going on. She probably couldn't tell that this cat was evil, she probably just knew that this was a cat I had met before.

I don't understand why you let me get that prey though. It's leaf-bare, and we're sworn enemies. I could kill you right now.

True. But you won't. And plus, Thunderclan has plenty of prey.

But still, we're enemies.

Rule number two of the warrior code?

Elder s and queen s- oh.

Exactly. The food most likely won't be yours. It'll be one of your clanmates. And there's no point in getting innocent cats in the middle of our war.

I said nothing, and instead just nodded in thanks and walked away, the squirrel in my jaws.

'~******~'

I returned to camp with the squirrel, a scrawny blackbird, and a mouse. Not much, but it was honest work, especially with the weather.

I shook my fur rid of snow, and dropped the prey into the fresh-kill pile. I turned back towards Poppyfern, who had been following me all this time.

"Was that one of your friends you and Maplepaw were talking about?"

I shook my head. "Quite the contrary actually. Yes, I do know him, and he is also considered an 'Ancient'. But he is my enemy. His name was Moon."

"So Moonpaw?"

"Probably not for long. You know how Maple can do that telepathy stuff? He told me earlier that he was doing his assessment, which means they will both be warriors in a few hours."

"What if they fail?"

"They won't. Those two were the smartest that our group back then had ever seen. Speaking of which, how did I do?"

"You did well today. I'll report to Stygiastar, and you'll be a warrior by sundown."

"No need, I'm right here." Both Poppyfern and myself hadn't noticed Stygiastar coming towards us from her den. I was worried that she had heard our conversation, but if she did, her body language didn't betray it. "I've been waiting for you to return. Duskpaw came back just before you." Then Stygiastar turned to Poppyfern. "Is he ready?"

Thankfully, Poppyfern nodded. "Please make him a warrior so I don't have to deal with him anymore."

Stygiastar chuckled and nodded to both of us. "Stonepaw, get something to eat. Then we'll hold the ceremony."

I turned and made my way to the fresh-kill pile. On the top was the squirrel from earlier.

Rule number two of the warrior code: Elders, The ill, Queens, and Kits must be fed before apprentices and warriors of the clan. Unless, I picked up the squirrel in my jaws, *given permission by a higher ranking cat.*

Take that , Moon.

I settled down comfortably next to my mother, who was sunbathing.

"Did Poppyfern say you did well?" She asked.

"Yep. But I think she would've said that no matter what. She want's me out of her life."

Jackalfur snorted. "Please. You know she loves you like a son." I rolled my eyes. "You're what she has until she and Icetooth have kits."

"Are you calling me kit practice?"

"Basically, yes." Jackalfur rolled over. "Can I have some of that squirrel?"

I pushed the squirrel towards her. "Sure. I'm not going to be able to finish all of it."

Together my mother an I finished up the squirrel. It didn't take us long, but we had a nice conversation while we ate.

Which is surprising seeing as I don't like having conversations, nor do I like socializing.

"Let all cat's old enough to catch their own prey join here beneath the Clanrock for a clan meeting!"

Pretty exceptional timing, if you ask me.

Cats swarmed in from their dens and the edges of their camp towards the center, where Stygiastar was sitting on top or the Clanrock.

"It is time that I performed my favorite ceremony: the naming of new warriors. Duskpaw, Stonepaw, please step forward."

Murmurs arose from the clan as my sister and I stepped closer to the Clanrock and looked up at our leader.

"Twigflower, is Duskpaw ready to become a warrior?"

The brown she-cat smiled, "She sure is!"

"In that case," Stygiastar looked up at the sky, "I, Stygiastar, leader of Shadowclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend her to you as a warrior in her turn." Stygiastar looked back down towards Duskpaw. "Duskpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Duskpaw's response was immediate. "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Duskpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Duskfire. Starclan honors your determination and agility, and we welcome you as a full member of Shadowclan."

Duskfire moved up to Stygiastar, where she licked the leaders shoulder as Stygiastar rested her head on top of Duskfall's.

That's actually a really nice name.

The can cheered her new name in unison. "Duskfire! Duskfire! Duskfire!"

Duskfire disappeared into the crowd and was surrounding by congratulating cats.

"Stonepaw, please step forward." I moved past a few cats that were lagging behind Duskfire.

"Poppyfern, is Stonepaw ready to become a warrior?"

"Please get him out of my responsibility."

"I'll take that as a yes." By this time, everyone had calmed down from congratulating Duskfire, and laughed at Poppyfern and Stygiastar's exchange.

"I, Stygiastar, leader of Shadowclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. He has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend him to you as a

warrior in his turn. Stonepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?"

I took a quick breath. *Goodbye to our truce, hello to death.* "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Stonepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Stonestripe. Starclan honors your strength and intensity, and we welcome you as a full member of Shadowclan."

I licked Stygiastar's shoulder as she rested her chin on my head. "Come to my den after everything calms down. I want to talk to you and Poppyfern."

My eyes widened as I realized that she may have heard our conversation after all. "Yes ma'am."

"There's no need to be so formal. You're one of the only cats in this clan I respect."

I purred very slightly at those words. The intimidating leader actually respected me!

I finally removed myself from Stygiastar's presence and dived into the mass of cats.

"Stonestripe! Stonestripe! Stonestripe!"

I pushed passed my clanmates, trying to find Poppyfern. I didn't have to look for very long, because she found me. "Just because I'm not responsible for you doesn't mean that you get to do whatever you want."

I rolled my eyes as Icetooth padded up beside her. "Don't pay attention to her." He gave me a large smile. "Congratulations, Stone."

"Thanks. Could I talk to Poppyfern for a minute?"

"Sure! You better not be stealing my mate."

"Please, she wouldn't let me."

Icetooth snorted at me remark. "Good point." He turned around and went back over to Acornheart, where he started talking with him.

I turned to look at Poppyfern, who was watching her mate leave. "Stygiastar wants to see us in her den."

"Why?"

"I dunno." That phrase seemed to be very common today.

We made our way over and into Stygiastar's den, where she was relaxing in her nest.

"First of all, congratulations Stonestripe. I look forward to patrols with you." I nodded my head in thanks. "But I wanted to talk about what I heard you guys say earlier. Who is this 'other group'?"

Poppyfern and I look nervously at each other.

She is our leader, and she said she respected me. But she may have been saying that just so that I let my guard down. I don't think she would do that though. I'm just being too cautious.

I also don't want to go back to the Moonpool. That was quite the trek.

I could just bring her to our meeting at the Gathering, but she's leader...

I took a very deep breath and faced her. "Okay. There's a lot of stuff to tell you, and a lot of cats for you to meet. We hold a meeting every Gathering. Usually it's only during the Gathering, but I can extended it to after the Gathering as well."

Stygiastar nodded. "This was a lot shorter than I expected it to be. Stonestripe, you're dismissed. Poppyfern, I still want to talk to you."

I nodded in thanks and left the den. I made my way over to the warrior's den and plopped down on the grass. I was way too tired to make a nest.

I closed my eyes and let sleep overcome me.

"And just what do you think you're doing?"

I opened one eye to see Acornheart standing over me. "Sleeping."

"You have to keep Vigil, remember?"

I groaned as I stood up and stretched.

"Oh, and sorry I didn't congratulate you earlier, Icetooth wanted to talk."

"No worries, I honestly keep forgetting that you're my brother. You're so much more social."

Acornheart laughed. "You may wanna start your vigil now, the sun is setting."

"Will do."

And the author forget's they're related as well.

2086 words! Nice.

It totally hasn't been 3 months... not at all.

So sorry about that! I'll try to be more regular, although I keep saying that and never follow through.

I don't really have much to say...

Bye!

-Maple

Chapter 16 - Flame

"Do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?"

"I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Flamepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Flamebreeze. Starclan honors your strength and integrity, and we welcome you as a full member of Skyclan."

I moved up to Billystar, and respectfully licked his shoulder as he rested his head on my shoulder.

"Flamebreeze! Flamebreeze! Flamebreeze!" The clan called out, although as I looked into the crowd, I could see Sparrow, now called Sparrowfur, staring me down.

And so it begins.

Sparrowfur stood up from where he was standing and made back to the warriors den. His head was hung low and his shoulders were hunched. He seemed... bored.

As I retreated into the crowd, Billystar called out. "Have you all forgotten? Tonight is the gathering! I have to announce who's going." Cats around me yowled with excitement as Billystar tried to quiet everyone down. "Besides Cedartail and the medicine cats, Skystorm, Snowheart, Peonypelt, Flamebreeze, Sparrowfur, and Yellowwhisker will be accompanying me to the gathering."

Perfect.

I assume that the others would be able to hold the meeting without me, or possibly without someone else, but it is definitely preferred

that everyone be there.

"Flamebreeze!" Yellowwhisker was sprinting over to me as she called out my name. She slid to a stop directly in front of me. "We're finally warriors!"

I gave my sister a small smile as she ranted on about all of the things she was excited about. I looked over her shoulder to see Stonecreek standing in front of his den, beckoning me with his tail.

"... And leading patrols and- Hey, are you even listening to me?"

I shook my head and looked back to Yellowwhisker. "No, sorry, I got distracted. Stonecreek was calling me, I'll talk with you on the way to the Gathering." I didn't bother waiting for a response as I moved past her and towards the medicine cat's den. Stonecreek was already waiting for me as I entered the den.

"We have another meeting tonight, right?" I nodded. "Okay. Is there anything different now that you're a warrior?"

"Well, we had a truce while we were apprentices so that it would be a fair fight, but that's broken now that we're warriors. So besides all the normal things, that's basically it."

"Okay. And how are your flames coming along?"

"Pretty well." I shot a short burst of flames out into the shape of a messy leaf. "I'm trying to learn how to shape it so that I can fit it through foliage without burning anything."

"Is that why the forest always smells like burning leaves when I go out to get herbs?"

"Probably."

"Yeah I would train against something non-flammable."

"Like what?"

"Rocks." Stonecreek looked at me as though I was stupid. Sure I wasn't the smartest, that title belongs to Maple, and sure, I hadn't

remembered that there were rocks in this forest, and sure, I hadn't-

Okay, now I'm starting to think that Stonecreek may have been right.

I turned around and exited the den, and was immediately greeted by Raineye. "Congratulations Flamebreeze! It took you long enough."

I snorted in response and responded, "Yeah, because you've been waiting all this time to retire to the elder's den."

"Ouch." Despite that remark, there was still a smile on Raineye's face.

"Seriously though, are you going to retire to the elder's den?"

"I don't know yet. It'd be great to stay with Jaypool, but it's also great to see the smile on her face when I bring her prey that I caught. So I might stick around for awhile."

"Well then, I look forward to patrols with you."

"Likewise."

I moved past Raineye and further into the center of the camp. The sun was starting to set, and our clan had to travel the furthest to reach the gathering, so we would be leaving very soon.

I decided to settle down next to Cedartail, who was eating a mouse by herself.

"Hello Flamebreeze. Congratulations on becoming a warrior!"

"Thanks." An awkward silence fell over us as Cedartail finished her mouse.

"You do remember that you have to keep vigil tonight, right?"

Being honest, I had completely forgotten about the vigil new warriors had to keep on the day they were promoted to warrior. Looks like the others would have to have the meeting without me.

"Right, I'll go and remind Billystar so that he can replace myself and my siblings."

Cedartail nodded to me and went back to the warriors den, while I turned towards the leader's den.

"Billystar?"

"Hmm?" Billystar's head moved from his paws, where it was resting. "Oh, hello Flamebreeze. What do you need?"

"Cedartail reminded me that my siblings and I need to keep vigil tonight."

Billystar shook his head, and responded, "Raineye must not have told you. The Warrior Code was changed a few generations ago. New warriors aren't required to keep a night-long vigil anymore, but new warriors are required to do something, which varies by clan. In Skyclan, new warriors must spend a full day, morning to morning, in the canopy of trees. And yes, we do keep the silence rule."

Well that sounds so *fun.*

"However, some clans keep the old tradition. Don't worry though. You get to choose the day you do it, it just has to be within the next few days. Before you do any patrols."

"Huh, Cedartail told me otherwise. She must have been messing with me." I shook my head, "Anyways, is it alright if I do it the day after tomorrow? I'd like to take tomorrow off because of the Gathering."

The brown tabby tom smiled politely, "Sure, that's fine. Just remember the rules, and the earlier you start, the better."

"Of course. Thank you, Billystar." I dipped my head to the tom respectfully and left the den.

Outside of the den, cats were beginning to gather, ready to leave for the gathering. This was a rather small amount of cats going to the gathering, and most cats were either lounging near the edges or the

clearing, or were dozing off in their nests.

I joined the group of cats near the entrance, and almost immediately Yellowwhisker came up to me, "Hey! So, anyways, as I was saying earlier, we can finally have mates, and-"

Oh Starclan, this is going to be a very *long walk.*

'~******~'

"Hey Flamebreeze!" Someone's voice called out behind me.

I turned my head to see Maple making his way over to me with a light jog. Somehow it doesn't surprise me that he already knows my warrior name. He probably overheard someone. "Hello Maple."

"Don't shorten names when we're in public. Don't want too many people getting suspicious, eh?"

I hadn't even thought of the possibility that cats may hear us shortening each other's names. "Oh, alright, well what do you need Maple-uh-"

"Maplepelt."

"Yeah. Maplepelt."

"Stone told me to tell you that we're having today's meeting after the Gathering, not during. And don't worry about telling your leader or anything, everyone will immediately go to their nests, and no one will know that you're gone."

"How-"

"Telepathy, remember?"

"Right."

"Alright, enjoy yourself, see you after the meeting."

I moved through the crowd of cats, eventually settling down next to Icetooth. We greeted each other with a nod, but otherwise stayed silent as we waited for one of the leaders to start the meeting. The weather was starting to warm up from leaf-brae, but I could still see a few cats fluffing their pelts out against the cold.

Finally, Gorsestar called out to the all cats, "Let tonight's gathering begin!"

Everyone took awhile to calm down, and the leader's tails were twitching and sweeping in impatience.

"Hailstar, would you like to begin?"Stygiastar seemed to be in an oddly good mood, if she was willing to let someone else begin.

Hailstar looked just as surprised as I was. "Uh, sure," He turned to the clans, "Riverclan is doing well, and fish are starting to return to the river. We should have new warriors soon, but their assessments have not yet taken place. Otherwise, we have no news."

Hailstar stepped back and allowed Gorsestar to step forward. "The prey is also returning to the moors, and we have five new warriors. Staghorn, Doefern, Swiftstorm, and Dahliaspot." She paused and let the cats around her cheer out in congratulations. "Also, Cinderface has moved into the nursery, and will be expecting kits soon."

Yet again, cats cheered in congratulations, and Cinderface timidly bowed her head and licked her chest in embarrassment.

Lynxstar moved up next, but I tuned out for most of it, only catching warrior names. Prey is running well, clan is healthy, blah blah blah.

I refocused when Stygiastar finally called the meeting to a close,

and cats started to disperse, following their leaders off of the island. What surprised me was that Stygiastar left Shadowclan to her deputy, Badgerclaw, and she herself stayed behind.

I averted my eyes to see Maple beckoning me towards the giant oak tree. Soon after, he himself climbed up the tree and settled himself across from Stygiastar.

I groaned inwardly. *I have to spend a full night in the trees two days from now. Do I really have to sit there?*

Well, no, you don't have to, but it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. What are the chances that you get to sit up on where the leader's sit?

Fair point. I lifted myself onto my paws and trotted towards the tree, quickly climbing up and settling myself next to Stone. "Good to see you again," I quickly mewed.

"Good to see you as well. And that was some impressive climbing. You reached this branch very quickly."

"A bonus of being Skyclan."

"Ah."

"Oh yeah, why is your leader here?" I also noticed the Shadeheart hadn't come.

"She maybe kinda sorta found out. But she's on our side, and I trust her."

Maple quieted everyone down and began our meeting. "Welcome everyone, and Stygiastar, of course. We'll start by going around and giving our new warrior names, just so that we know what to call each other in public. I was named Maplepelt."

"Swiftstorm."

"Flamebreeze."

"Stonestripe."

"..." We all turned to look at Heron, who had yet to say anything. "What? My assessment is tomorrow."

Maple nodded. "Alright. Stygiastar, to keep it simple, we're all cats from the past, what you would call 'ancients'. We were each born with siblings that are on the opposite side. Before you all ask, I didn't say evil because only we think that they're evil. They think they're doing the right thing.

"We were each also born with powers that somewhat relate to our names. If you're willing to stick around after the meeting, I'll fill you in on both all of the other cats and their known powers."

The black she-cat nodded.

"Speaking of which, how are everyone's powers coming along? And if you feel like it, you can give a little demonstration."

A chorus of good's and well's echoed throughout the group, and I added my own at the end, after everyone had finished. "It's going good."

And then Stonecreek had to speak up. "You mean it's going *well*, except for all of the parts where you burn the forest."

"How does this not surprise me." Stonecreek chirped.

"And I didn't ask your opinion." I replied. I saw Stygiastar whisper something to Maple, and he in turn laughed at shook his head, explaining something to her.

Yet again, everyone noticed that Heron hadn't said anything. This time, I also heard what Maple said to Stygiastar, "Oh, and we all agreed not to make fun of Heron when he uses his power."

"Why is that?"

"Heron, take it away."

The tom rolled his eyes, "Fine." Heron opened up his wings and flew around for a bit, even pulling off a flip. I could see a few of his muscles twitching, indicating that he hadn't yet perfected the craft.

Heron landed cleanly back on his paws, which was a huge improvement from the last time we met.

"Oh, now I see why."

We continued the meeting, Maple going over a few things such as updates on the other five, as well as their allies. When the meeting was adjourned, Maple, Heron, Stone, and Stygiastar stayed behind. Meaning it was only Swift and I, plus our accompanists, walking back to our clans.

"How's Skyclan doing?"

"Swift we were just at a Gathering."

"Well, yeah, but I want to hear your report. So I guess what I'm asking is 'How are you and Sparrow doing'?"

"We're doing okay. Sparrow has been oddly quiet, I don't think I've talked to him since we've become warriors."

"Huh, that is weird."

"How's your life going?"

"Pretty well. Nothing too special."

Swift's medicine cat, Blackleaf, chimed in. "Except for Haretuft. He is apparently *really* special.

"Oooooo, looks like someone's got a crush."

Swift covered her ears in embarrassment, "Shut up! Is it really that obvious?"

"Swiftstorm, you've been padding after him since you were a kit in the nursery. Everyone knows. Even Haretuft himself."

"Wait, even he knows?"

"Yes, he's talked to me about it multiple times. I haven't gotten anything from him yet though."

Swiftstorm looked crestfallen at the fact that she doesn't have a for-sure mate yet.

Luckily, Stonecreek and I were saved from more embarrassing talk when Swift and Blackleaf turned to head towards their camp. "We're heading off here, we'll see you next Gathering." We exchanged farewells, and then went our separate ways.

Lol I'm so good at updating.

Another 2000+ word chapter though, sooooooooo.

Also, I think that Flame is becoming a a guinea pig for gatherings... but it kinda makes sense. He's the last cat in each 6-part section, and Gatherings happen a moon apart, so they're spaced out.

Absolutely no plans yet for the next chapter, so expect a wait. Maybe another few months if it gets bad.

Until I decide to update next,

- Maple

Chapter 17 - Maple

Moon has been acting very odd as of late. He hasn't been his normal, social self. He hasn't been reclusive, as that seems to be impossible for him, but his social presence seems restricted.

I don't know if this is something that I should be wary of, in case he's planning something, or he could just be getting older and more narcissistic than he already was. The former is incredibly more likely, as Moon is smart enough to know how much narcissism is too much narcissism.

He hasn't been volunteering for patrols, or gloating about who knows what.

This makes me very concerned. Moon wouldn't change lifestyles that easily. That means that he has to be planning something, likely that will cause someone to die.

Or, he's being quite the genius himself and he's just messing with my head. Who knows?

I continued digging into my mouse, which was starting to get a little cold from me not eating it. I made sure to keep an eye on Moon as he moved around the camp, watching him as he went over to Greytail and asked if there were a patrol he could go with.

Moon nodded in response to whatever Greytail's answer was, and turned to go back towards the fresh-kill pile. As he bent down to grab a piece of prey, he froze. Moon turned to me, his eyes wide, and then he snapped his head to look at the nursery.

I quickly looked in the same direction as Moon, intensifying my glare as I focused in on the nursery and whatever Moon was looking at.

What? I asked.

I heard something behind the nursery.

But what are you so panicked about?

Remember Frostkit?

Oh. Frostkit had mysteriously been killed overnight in Riverclan, or so I'd heard. It was announced at the last gathering, but I was surprised that Moon had remembered. *What about it?*

Lion told me that he heard a noise the day she was killed.

But there aren't any kits inside the nursery.

Which makes me worried that whoever is doing this isn't going for just kits.

Oh.

"Maplepelt? Are you alright? You're just staring at the nursery."

I shook my head and looked over to see Thrushheart settling down next to me. He drew a paw over his ear and then ruffled his fur, countering the breeze that was flowing through the air. I snuck a look back over at Moonpelt, who nodded and continued on his way.

"Yeah, I'm fine, just thinking about something." We sat in silence after that, enjoying the warm sun that was coming with new leaf and the breeze.

Our silence was interrupted by a clanmate. "Would you two care to join me on a hunting patrol?" Tigerpelt asked.

Thrushheart answered for us, because I still wasn't really paying attention. "We'd love to. Where are we headed?"

"I thought we could check towards the lake, and then move up to the Greenleaf Twolegplace. No one has been on that side of the territory in a few days, so prey should be running rather well. We can leave right now if you're ready."

Thrushheart looked over to me and asked, "Maplepelt? Would you be okay with leaving right now?"

Still partially focused on my amazing task of paying attention to the nursery, I distractedly replied, "Sure." My mind still drifting off into thought, I moved towards the tunnel out of camp. Thrushheart stayed at my side, while Tigerpelt moved out ahead of us to lead us towards the Twolegplace.

If the mysterious killer were to target someone in our clan, who would it be? Frostkit had no relation to our feud, so it wouldn't make sense for the target to be any of the reborn. I quickly ran through a list of all the possible cats that could be in danger.

It wouldn't make sense for the killer to go after a senior warrior, that would be too risky. Going after a leader or deputy would make sense to disturb peace, but also risky. Finchfur was a warrior before he was a medicine cat, so that doesn't make sense either. That left the young warriors who weren't reborn.

But who?

"Maplepelt, will you look past that bramble patch? Thrushheart, you go down by the lakeshore and try to find something. I think I heard a thrush a few tree-lengths back, so I'll go and check that out. Meet up back here once you've caught a few pieces, and then we'll go to the Twolegplace", Tigerpelt said, interrupting my train of thought.

Right. Clan first. Then thinking.

"Sure thing", I responded. Thrushheart nodded in agreement before bounding off further down the path, towards the lake in between the five clans. Tigerpelt turned in the opposite direction and went back the way we came, ears pricked and mouth slightly open to taste the air.

I split the difference between them and went towards the bramble patch, intending to make it to the other side of the patch. Looking around to make sure that no one was watching, and then extended my roots out from my paws to be able to walk over the patch without getting poked by the brambles.

I retracted my roots immediately after I made it to the other side of the brambles, and opened my jaws to see if I could taste any prey scents.

Padding around, I couldn't seem to find any prey, despite the warmer weather of Newleaf and the sun shining down through the canopies. This meant that I was able to let my thoughts wander back to the potential murder that might take place tonight.

Thrushheart, Amberpool, and Frostfur were all unlikely targets, as they had some relation to the ongoing war, despite two of them not even knowing anything about it.

That left Galebreeze, Birchclaw, Poppyfern, and Goldenstripe. All four were young warriors. Galebreeze was the oldest, so that took him almost completely out of the picture. That left the other three.

Suddenly, the scent of vole washing over my nose brought me out of my thoughts. I swiveled my ears, trying to pinpoint its location. I finally locking onto a tangle of roots under a large tree, and saw a little ball of brown scurrying around. I bunched all of my legs in, settling into a hunter's crouch, and ever so carefully stalked forwards, getting as close to the vole as possible without alerting it of my presence.

Once I felt as though I was close enough, I stopped, and transferred all of my weight into my hind paws. I would've leaped immediately, but the vole picked up its head, and looked straight at me. We both froze in place, staring at each other with our eyes wide. I made sure to keep my weight bunched in my hind paws, just in case I had to react quickly and chase after the vole.

The vole suddenly took of, and I sprinted after it, legs churning against the ground. I wasn't the fittest cat in the clan, so my breath ran out rather quickly, and I was soon wheezing for my breaths as I

slammed into countless leafs chasing down this vole.

As our chase continued around a rather wide tree trunk, I started to hear voices. Whether they were clanmates or not, I could use them to help me catch this vole. As the voices got louder, I shouted, "Vole coming your way!"

The leader of the group turned towards the sound of my voice, and almost jumped in shock as the vole ran directly into her paws. The cat immediately slammed its paws down on the vole, killing it instantly.

"Thank you, Starclan, for this prey", I heard them mutter. The cat then looked up, and at me. "Who are you?" They asked.

Only after my adrenaline from the rush of the chase had died down, did I realize where I was.

Quite a ways into Shadowclan territory.

"I'm Maplepelt of Thunderclan. Sorry about being on your territory, I didn't realize. Would you let me take the vole back to Thunderclan?"

The same Shadowclan cat at the front responded, "Absolutely not. This prey was caught on Shadowclan land, and a Shadowclan cat caught it."

"Now now Dawnfire, let's be reasonable here", I looked to who was now talking, and saw Shadowclan's leader, Stygiastar. "Maplepelt chased the vole from his territory into ours, and even warned us that it was coming. I think he deserves the vole."

The cat who caught the vole, Dawnfire, responded, "But Stygiastar-"

"No buts, give the vole back to Maplepelt."

With a large groan, Dawnfire picked up the vole, walked over to me, and dropped it at my paws. "Whatever."

"Thanks", I whispered as she turned around to head back towards her patrol. I quickly said another thanks to Stygiastar before turning

around and heading back in the direction of Thunderclan territory.

Note to self: Dawnfire isn't the friendliest of cats.

I made my way back to our meeting spot, as the whole chase and running over the border ordeal had taken up a good deal of time. I smelt a thrush on my way back, and the thrush decided to not be difficult and allow me to catch it.

Which was obviously quite a nice break from having to run into Shadowclan territory.

"Maplepelt! What took you so long? It feels like we've been waiting here for moons!" Tigerpelt shouted as I appeared into his field of vision, a playful grin across his face.

"Sorry about that, chased a vole into Shadowclan territory and met a patrol. Stygiastar was nice enough to give the vole back to me though."

"That's good. If you two want, you can head to the Greenleaf Twolegplace right now. I'm going to start taking this prey back, and also report to Lynxstar about what happened at the border. I know you may not like it, Maplepelt, but she should know", Tigerpelt said as he bent down to pick up a few pieces of prey.

"Are you sure you don't want any help with those, Tigerpelt?" Thrushheart asked.

"Yeah, it's okay. I'll get someone back at camp to help me out."

Thrushheart nodded, accepting Tigerpelt's response, and turned, beckoning me with his tail to follow his brisk pace in the direction of the Twolegplace.

We kept the brisk pace on the way to the Twolegplace, barely speaking despite our friendship. I took the silence as an invitation to once again dive into my thoughts about who the targeted cat could possibly be.

The issue with this is that there is yet to be a pattern since only one cat had been killed. I know it may be psychopathic, but having another cat

die might help prevent further deaths.

No, that's stupid. Even under the ideology of "sacrifice one to save many". I have to figure this out today.

I looked over to Thrushheart, who was still blissfully unaware of my trance and had his eyes focused straight ahead.

If whoever this cat is is trying to kill cats close to involved in the war, the target would be Goldenstripe. But I don't think that Frostkit had any relation with Heron, other than them being denmates.

"Hey Maplepelt?" Thrushheart suddenly asked.

I shook myself out of my thinking trance and looked to Thrushheart, who was still held his gaze straight ahead. "Yeah?"

"Can I ask you something?"

"Of course you can! What's up?"

"I'm having some romantic troubles." This was a mild surprise. Even with my wits, and Thrushheart being my best friend, I had never realized that he interested in someone.

"Oh?" I responded.

"Keep this between you and I, okay?"

"Yeah, I kind of figured." It was kind of amazing me how Thrushheart was able to keep walking whilst talking to me.

"What would one do if their preferred mate wasn't a clan cat?"

That sent me into some kind of shock. I had never noticed Thrushheart sneaking off to see someone, much less a rogue that wasn't in the clan. "You're seeing a rogue?"

"No."

I stopped immediately in my tracks, and Thrushheart did as well. "Thrushheart."

"What?"

"You're seeing a kittypet?"

"Yes."

I genuinely didn't know how to respond. Here I am, this once in a generation genius, and I could never smell the scent of kittypet on my best friend.

"Well..." I started, "I don't... I don't know where to go with this. I thought this would be something with another cat in Thunderclan, especially with you. But, I mean, I guess try to make it socially acceptable if you want to be with her forever."

I continued walking in the direction of the Twolegplace, "I'm fine with your relationship with her, it's just weird, is all. What's her name?"

"Her name is Willow. I can take you to see her soon if you'd like."

"Yes, that'd be nice and a help. Just take me next time you go to see her."

It's still crazy that Thrushheart is mates with a non-clan cat. And a kittypet no less! It's weird being surprised...

Wait.

I stopped in my tracks once again.

Surprise. I need surprise.

I turned to Thrushheart, "Finish hunting at the Twolegplace. I need to go." I immediately sprinted off in the direction of camp, leaving Thrushheart in my dust.

I don't need to figure out who is the target if I can stop the killer before they kill. I can listen for the sound of a cat moving in the brush and then force them into the open secretly with my roots.

Thrushheart called after me in confusion as I ran, but I didn't

acknowledge him or turn around at all. If my memory serves me right, Heron mentioned that Frostkit was killed in the late afternoon.

I quickly took a look up into the sky, and saw that the sun was starting to dip below the horizon.

Fox-dung.

I may have taken too long to crack the code to saving a cat. And what use was cracking a code if it doesn't end up helping anyone?

This killer must have been quite skilled to have pulled off such a feat in Riverclan in broad daylight.

My heart pounded in fear that I hadn't thought fast enough as I neared the camp. If I wasn't fast enough, that might mean that I indirectly allowed the death of a clanmate. And I couldn't live with that, especially if the war were to come to a point where cats must decide between two sides. How could a reasonable cat choose the side of a cat who indirectly killed a clanmate?

Then, suddenly, as I was about to enter through the gorse bush that led into camp, I heard rustling.

My head snapped in the direction of the sound, and my paws followed suit. It took a lot less time to reach the sound than I thought it would, which only meant I had to work on my hearing later.

I broke through a layer of bramble and continued sprinting, the perpetrator coming into view.

"*You"*, I spit, still running, malice heavy in my voice.

The cat turned their head and looked at me, surprise evident in his gaze.

And I leapt.

AND THAT'S A WRAP FOLKS!

Book one is officially completed!

It's been absolutely forever since I started this book, I think December of 2020?

Thank you to all who actually read this book, and an even bigger thanks to those who submitted their cats to be used way back at the beginning.

There will be a follow up part after this concerning the next book in the series. Please read it.

Thank you everyone!

- Maple

Author's Note

OOOOOOOO a cliffhanger! Who's this mysterious cat that's killing everyone? What's up with Thrushheart? Is Moonpelt okay? Will Haretuft ever notice Swiftstorm?

With book one officially coming to a close, I imagine that at least two of you are wondering when book two will be premiered. So here's that information for the two of you.

I think I mentioned this in an announcement, like, forever ago, but I have an idea for a new book, and I'm really enjoying working on my one-shot book. I, of course, also want to finish this series, but I only have a scene or two planned, and absolutely nothing pre-written.

So here's the plan.

Like I mentioned in that announcement, I'm going to set a reader goal for this book, just so that I can be sure that I won't be wasting my time and a lot of people actually want to see a continuation of this series. If we never meet this goal, the next book will never be posted.

I guess we ca also do a vote goal with the same promise.

GOAL READERS - 5k

GOAL VOTES - 310

We are currently at 1.1k after about three years, so make sure to share this book with all for your friends if you want to see more.

If everyone who reads the book would vote, I'd have to start the book right now!

In the meantime, I'll be starting up a new book, and continuing my one-shot series. Make sure to put in some requests for me, I can't come up with everything on my own!

Thank you again to everyone who read this book and those who supported me through the writing process.

- Maple